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ABSTRACT

This monograph is intended to provide English teachers, department heads, and administrators in two-year colleges with program descriptions and guidelines indicating the variety of materials and methods currently in use. The contents of this monograph include "English at Forest Park Community College," "English at Hinds Junior College," "Reading and Writing at Staten Island Community College," "Graduate Departments and Community College English Teachers," and "Guidelines for Junior College English Teacher Training Programs." (RB)

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Teaching English in Two-Year Colleges

Three Successful Programs

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
1111 KENYON ROAD, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801

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The articles in this collection appeared originally in the May 1974 issue of *College English*, an official journal of the National Council of Teachers of English edited by Richard Ohmann, Wesleyan University. "Guidelines for Junior College English Teacher Training Programs" appeared originally in the October 1971 issue of *College Composition and Communication*, also an official journal of the National Council of Teachers of English.

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Richard Friedrich
Elizabeth McPherson

*English at Forest Park Community College**

There's no way Forest Park Community College in St. Louis can see itself as typical. Junior colleges are not homogeneous; they vary as widely as the four-year colleges on which many of the early ones were modeled. Some junior colleges offer only the first two years of a traditional liberal arts program; some give only vocational courses; some are finishing schools for young ladies, only slightly modernized. Some provide dormitories; some are so doggedly non-residential that they refuse to provide lists of available accommodations in the area. Some operate in the daytime from eight to four; some are open only from four to midnight; some begin at seven and go straight through till ten or later; there's a rumor that one or two operate straight around the clock. A few of them are privately supported, either by churches or private endowments; a few get all their money from local taxes; a few get it all from the state; most depend on revenue from a combination of sources. Some charge more than a thousand dollars a term in tuition, and some are absolutely free, at least to local residents.

A very few date from the nineteenth century; quite a few are so new the students arrive well before the bricklayers. A fashionable comment, several years ago, was that a new junior college opened its doors every week, and though that comment sounds quaint today, it's probably safe to say that the majority are less than twenty years old. Some enforce careful entrance requirements, some provide placements tests and tracking systems, some are completely open admission: anybody over eighteen, or anybody with a high school diploma or its equivalent, can take any course for which registration is open. Some are almost all white, some are almost all black, and some are almost integrated. It isn't even safe to say that all of them are two-year schools; an associate degree, awarded

* *This report has been assembled by Richard Friedrich, Head of the Department of English, and Elizabeth McPherson, Humanities Division Chairperson, with the help of the staff of the English Department at Forest Park Community College.*

at the end of two years or the completion of 64 semester hours, is probably the most common indication that students have "completed" the college work, but three-year programs are not unheard of, and one-year programs resulting in some kind of certificate are plentiful. You can't recognize them by their names, either. Many are simply called "colleges," one at least is called "university," and the rest are variously known as "technical schools," "institutes," "junior colleges," "community colleges," or sometimes "community junior colleges."

Although it's not always a reliable guide, the word "community" in the name usually means a commuter institution offering three kinds of programs: transfer, vocational, and enrichment, currently known as "continuing education."

The College

Forest Park Community College, one of three two-year colleges in the county-wide Junior College District of St. Louis, calls itself a comprehensive public junior college. That is, its current catalog lists eight options under "college and university parallel," including Afro-American studies, art, business administration, engineering science, general education, liberal arts, music, pre-medicine, pre-dentistry, and pre-pharmacy. Under "career" are listed twenty-six possibilities: accounting, advertising design and commercial art, child care assistant, clerk typist, clinical laboratory technology, cooperative education, data processing, dental assisting, dental hygiene, drafting and design technology, electrical engineering technology, electrical-electronic technology, electronic engineering technology, engineering drafting, fire protection technology, funeral service education, hotel restaurant and institutional technology, human services, law enforcement, mechanical engineering technology, medical office assistant, medical secretary, nursing, radiologic technology, respiratory therapy, and secretarial. These twenty-six are complete with citizens' advisory boards, required curricula, and the official title, "career program." Nevertheless, the distinction between a program labeled "career" and a course of study that leads to a job is fuzzy for two reasons. One is that official new career programs are being developed faster than the catalog can keep up, and the other is that some courses regularly offered, automotive repair or recreational leadership, for instance, have not yet reached the status of "career" programs. Furthermore, many students are not registered in a program, but are taking individually selected courses which will lead to a specific job. And many of the listed programs are two-year in theory only; students either take a few courses and get jobs, some of them returning a year or so later to collect their certificates or, if they do finish the program, take longer than two years to do it. In fact, many students take a course or two over a period of five or six years before they are officially admitted to a "program," by which time they have many of the program "requirements" out of the way.

Forest Park's enrollment varies from five to seven thousand students, depending on economic and weather conditions during registration, although FTE's (full time equivalents—the total number of credit hours divided by twelve) are usually much less. For spring 1974 the head count is 5,685, but we had an ice storm. Discovering how many people are in a program or, indeed, in the

college is a puzzle unique to a commuter community college; if students are taking twelve credit hours and working forty hours, are they full-time students, full-time firemen, full-time parents, or part-time everything?

Of the six or seven thousand students who register for at least something every year, only about ten per cent "graduate." The 1973 commencement program listed 225 Associate in Arts degrees, 338 Associate in Applied Science. Given these figures and the difficulties of determining who is a part-time student, who a full-time student, who is "first year" and who "second year," and who has "dropped out"—that same student will probably be back next fall or year after next—it's hard to say just what significance the term two-year college has. Whatever their status, however, whether they think of themselves as career students or transfer students, full or part-time, night or day, almost all of these students take English composition, usually among the first courses they register for.

The idea of low cost post-secondary education for all is a fairly new idea in St. Louis. Private high tuition colleges and universities such as Washington University, St. Louis University, and Webster College, have existed for a long time, but there was nothing poor people could afford. The Junior College District held its first classes in high school buildings, evenings only, in 1963, the same year that the University of Missouri opened a branch in St. Louis. Forest Park's tuition, $15 a credit hour, making the cost of a full semester nearly $300, still cuts out an immorally large number of potential students, but it's not even the same language as the $1000 to $1500 a semester students pay at the old, established universities.

When the voters in the St. Louis area, early in the sixties, voted the bonds that made the three colleges possible, they were generous. The bond issue providing for buildings and equipment was one of the largest that had ever been passed in the country. As a consequence, the physical plants on all three campuses are carefully designed, handsomely built, and magnificently equipped with the latest in educational hardware, some of which never worked, some of which still hasn't been ripped off, and some of which is operable and occasionally used. The two other district colleges are both suburban, one approximately ten miles to the north and the other ten miles to the south of the city. Their campuses are fairly typical of modern junior college architecture—isolated buildings scattered across rolling lawns. Forest Park, designed as the inner city college, is a mile or so within the western limits of the city, seven miles from the downtown area, and built on the site of an old amusement park which was providentially destroyed by fire. Although it is not actually a single building, the two four-story wings of the main classrooms are connected with each other and with the student center by overpasses and to the theater by an underground passage. Only the gymnasium is separate. Although the grounds contain a fountain and an impressive number of struggling, newly planted trees, most of the remainder of the college's thirty-seven acres are parking lots. Many students drive cars, but Forest Park, unlike the other two colleges, is accessible by fairly regular bus service.

Whether the outside of the building looks like a prison, a warehouse, or a

masterpiece of architectural city planning, is a matter of some controversy. It was intended to be an urban building, and there can be little argument about the efficient use of inside space. Identical classrooms stretch down one wall of the nearly quarter-mile long building, broken here and there by small study areas. On the opposite side is a line of faculty offices interspersed with eight or ten study carrels. Although the carpeted hall that separates the classrooms from the offices is not more than ten feet wide, and crowded between classes with moving bodies, no fatal accidents have been reported.

Each classroom is equipped not only with blackboards but with permanently installed overhead projectors and angle-designed walls to serve as overhead screens. Many of them are wired for ITV, many of them have movie screens, and half the large lecture halls are equipped, in a frenzy of spending when money was abundant, with elaborate push-button responder systems whereby students, by pushing one of five buttons located on their armrests, could answer the teacher without talking, and the lecturer, without missing a modifier, could be immediately aware that ten out of seventy-five students didn't understand a word of what was being said. The system was also intended as a means for instant response to multiple-choice quizzes, as a fancy substitute for discussion or thought. Unfortunately (or fortunately) the system never worked. In addition to wires, buttons, consoles, and other such marvels, in the district's early stages there was plenty of money for staff, and the district recruited experienced and "expensive" teachers from all over the country. Many of the teachers have survived the disappearance of funds, but the equipment, ten years later, can seldom be replaced or repaired. Insurance became too expensive more than two years ago.

Financial support comes about equally from three sources: local taxation, state appropriation, and student tuition. In the early days levies were passed as generously as bond issues but, like everywhere else in the country, the taxpayers have rebelled, and no new levy has succeeded recently. What money there is is divided among the colleges in proportion to enrollment, and as funds get tighter, the tension increases. Every new deanship is looked on with suspicion by the faculty; arguments rage over whether faculty salaries should be brought back up to the 75th national percentile, or whether more stairways should be carpeted instead. Lots of faculty energy is spent poring over the district budget to see if someone is holding out. There's always a suspicion (hope?) that money is available to pay the staff more. The lowest paid classified employee in the district gets just a little over $4000 a year. Low enrollment "high-cost" programs disappear, and periodically somebody suggests that if we'd just raise tuition a *little* bit more, think what we could do. Every year, in fact, the District Compensation Committee uses more time and more energy than any other single unit on campus.

The Students

It is clear, however, that any increase in student costs would prohibit many of our students from coming to school; enrollment has been a problem since tuition went from $13 to $15 two or three years ago. The fact is that our

students cannot afford to pay very much. According to the annual survey conducted by the American Council on Education in 1972 nearly a quarter of our student body came from families whose annual income was less than $4000, and more than half reported that their parents made less than $8000. Only twenty percent had "middle incomes" ($15,000 a year or over). These figures can be better understood by knowing that the same survey shows that nationally only 22% of students in post-secondary schools come from this poverty level. Nationally, more than half have family incomes of more than $12,000.

It is hardly surprising to find then that while 54% of the country's undergraduates list their family as their principal means of support while they are in college, only 11% of our students do. Part of the reason may be that 64% of our students are twenty-two years or older and 37% are more than twenty-six. Turned around, it is clear that the age of our students can be explained by a glance at their family incomes. Very few of them can afford to move directly from high school to college unless they have scholarships, grants, or work-study, and these are rapidly disappearing sources of support.

So work is important to our students, before they come, while they're here, and after. In response to the statement, "I have been employed for at least a year while *not* [italics ACE's] in school," 60% of our students answered yes. Since the survey does not even envision that a student may be working full-time while he or she goes to school, no such question is asked and therefore no statistics are available. Nevertheless, our impression that well over 90% of the students in our classes are working part or full-time, and the other 10% looking for work, is based on what our students tell us in the papers they write and the explanations they give for missing a class or two. Whatever the statistics actually are, any sharp rise in unemployment (and last year it was more than 17% in St. Louis) brings a sharp drop in enrollment.

Even though our students are low on the economic scale, they are not academically low. That same ACE survey reports them even with or slightly above the national norms for high school grades and honors.

Aside from architecture, student age, and job paraphernalia, our school looks different from the others because we're the "black school" in St. Louis. Around here that means that about half of the students are black and the other half white. This is neither a boast nor an apology, simply St. Louis's attitude in 1974. The more publicized struggles over racism of a few years ago have disappeared, but the struggle to integrate the staff continues.

The Staff

After three years of near violence, Forest Park finally achieved a black president. We also have a couple of black deans and two female deans, not much for an affirmative action program ostensibly in effect for two years. The English Department has twenty-two full-time members; of these, five are black and nine are female. (We *could* boast that that gives us fourteen "minority" members, but actually two of the women are black.) The Department does in fact actively recruit black candidates whenever there is an opening.

We come from all over the country: only five of us from the local area. Others come from Alabama, Washington state, Arkansas, Louisiana, Illinois, Tennessee, and California. Five have taught in high schools, eight are refugees from colleges or universities, and eight have taught only in community colleges. One came from a newspaper. The number of years we have been community college English teachers ranges from one to eighteen. Three are over forty, about half are in their thirties, and the rest, naturally enough, are twenty-some. We have worked full-time as lawyers, machinists, secretaries, newspaper reporters, legal stenographers, shoe salesmen, cannery workers, lumberjacks, farmers, Peace Corps volunteers, and clothing salesmen, and one of us has been a nun. We hold degrees from FontBonne, Xavier, St. Procopius, Vassar, and Oberlin; from the Universities of Wisconsin, Illinois, Southern California, Indiana, Kansas, Washington, California at Berkeley, Southern Illinois, and Missouri; also from Notre Dame, Harvard, Stanford, Reed, William Jewell, and St. Louis University. Two staff members are graduates of a special program for training community college English teachers.

We've also done some publishing: eight textbooks on the market and three under contract. Almost everybody in the department writes. We know of three or four unpublished novels, one published play, and lots of poetry, not to mention occasional articles in professional journals. We also attend conferences in fairly large numbers; sixteen people at CCCC in Cincinnati, thirteen in Boston, eleven in New Orleans, and we took the college president with us two years. Somebody always represents us at NCTE, now and then somebody goes to MLA, and more than half the department attends the Midwest Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College.

Six of us have never been married, there have been nine divorces, and eleven of us have managed to produce some thirty children. Eight are married and currently living with their spouses, but that might be a little misleading, since two of us are married to each other, the District's nepotism rules having been recently reinterpreted.

We hold only three things in common. (1) Nobody has a doctorate, although four have completed THE COURSE WORK and one is likely to finish in dialect and linguistics. (2) A former department head once remarked that the right wing of the department consisted of those who voted for president in 1968, but in 1972 probably everybody has a right to the bumper sticker, "Don't blame me." (3) Everybody in the department is more interested in teaching composition than literature, although many are interested in both. This is hardly surprising since one of the first questions asked in every interview is, "How do you feel about teaching composition?"

The Curriculum

This commitment is reflected on our course offerings. We teach between eighty and ninety sections each semester; of these, all but eight or ten are writing courses. And, in fact, even the literature courses are primarily aimed toward student writing—not the traditional critical paper, but their own unstruc-

tured reactions to what they have read, in journals they keep informally or in short stories, poems, or slides they create themselves. Of the more than one-hundred-fifty writing sections offered during the regular academic year, eight are in journalism. The remainder are about evenly divided between Composition I and Composition II.

Unlike many two-year colleges, we use no tracking system. All courses carry college transfer credit. Until recently we offered three tracks in composition: a developmental or remedial course which we abandoned because it seemed to label rather than develop, a so-called communications course for non-transfer students, and standard English composition. Communications was for students whom the school called "terminal," i.e. students who were in "career" programs. This course was supposed to be separate but equal—just as demanding but more concerned with the practicalities of writing. The idea, in the words of one dean, was that "a plumber doesn't need Chaucer." We abandoned this one for several reasons. First, like most separate but equal plans, it turned out to be separate and unequal. Second, contrary to a pervasive impression, transfer composition was not an impractical esoteric exercise in which students brooded over Middle English or oohed and aahed about the beauties of nightingales. Third, and perhaps most important, nobody knew for sure what the three courses were supposed to do. Did some teach spelling to secretaries and automotive mechanics? Did others help data processors and policemen produce more coherent reports? Did any do anything of any real value to anybody? Did communications, as the name implied, deal with television and film and speech making? If it was part of a track, were "terminal students" there because nobody expected them to be fully healthy in their handling of language?

Abandoning that tracking system was one of the first indications that the department could do anything they couldn't stop us from doing. It was simple: one semester we just dropped offering anything but "composition"—a transfer course. Now everybody takes "English," and students who begin in dental technology and later decide they want a degree in social work are no longer penalized by a four-year school's refusal to accept "non-transfer" English.

Freshman Comp I

Putting everybody who wants English[1] in the same kind of class probably speeded up a change already underway. Gradually we dropped handbooks and rhetorically arranged anthologies; we stopped assigning conventional five-hundred

[1] A small percentage of entering students (something less than five percent) are counseled into the General Curriculum, a separate college division which provides a semester or a year of pre-college, largely non-credit, work for students whose records seem to indicate they have small chance of success in any regular program. Recommendations to this special program are based on two factors: a score of less than the tenth percentile on the SCAT test, and graduation in the bottom third of their high school class. Students in the program take math lab, special work in social science and humanities, and writing lab. If the entrance criteria are misleading, as they often are for Forest Park students, the writing lab teachers, who are not assigned to the regular English Department, can move students into a credit course any time during the semester.

word themes and stopped evaluating writing in terms of topic sentences and conformity to the Associated Press stylebook. We had already dropped the research paper; not one in ten of our students ever wrote another one. Gradually we evolved our own notions of what a first semester course should include and what it should require.

Now the main stress is on the nature of language—what it is, how it affects our view of ourselves and the world, how we use it to manipulate people and how we are manipulated by it. We don't teach linguistics—far from it—but we do try, through games, experiments, and our own belligerence, sometimes, to give students an honest picture of what goes on in human communication, both spoken and written. We talk about what "correctness" in language really means. We have to, because early on in every section, every semester, some student says, "But when are we going to learn what we do *wrong*? When are we going to do some *English* in here?" We try to remove the impression that writing is a matter of "getting it right," that English is no more than red-pencilled errors and chasing elusive commas. Past experience has given most of our students, like most Americans, the notion that they're "bad in English." They're afraid to write because somebody has convinced them they can't. One of our main jobs is erasing that impression.

Everybody in the department agrees on the main purpose of this first course, but not everybody approaches it in the same way. Some teachers use one of the department approved textbooks; some prefer to teach without a text, using materials from the press, their own collections, or the students themselves. Whatever the approach, however, every teacher, full or part-time, subscribes to the departmental aims, which are handed to all students early in the semester. The aims tell them that by the end of the semester, they should:

1. Be more confident of their ability to communicate in writing
2. Be a more fluent writer
3. Have written regularly in a journal about anything at all of their choosing
4. Experience, understand, and internalize the following about the nature of language:
   a. that it is spoken
   b. that it is symbolic
   c. that both the symbols and the systems of symbols are arbitrary
   d. that it is changing
5. Experience, understand, and internalize that no one dialect is inherently superior to any other
6. Experience, understand, and internalize some social, political, and economic implications of language, including such issues as sexism and racism
7. Experience, understand, and internalize the relationship between a human being and his language
8. Be writing directly and vigorously
9. Be able to support generalizations with specific statements or examples
10. Have gained some experience in expository writing

Most of us find the third aim, writing regularly in a journal about anything at all of their own choosing, is a good way of working toward the first two, confidence and fluency. Methods of assigning the journal and methods of dealing with it vary, of course. In some classes, students are assured that their

journals are completely private: nobody else, including the teacher, will read them. In others the journals are collected periodically, usually three or four times a semester, and the teacher responds to the entries, much as she or he would respond to a letter from a friend. Sometimes students read their entries to other members of the class. Sometimes they are asked to pick some idea that particularly appeals to them, or some sentence they think particularly successful, and expand it into a more formal paper. Sometimes they select entries they want other people to read and these entries are typed, duplicated, and distributed to the entire class. Even though names aren't attached, anonymity fades rapidly because the writers find it hard to keep quiet when somebody in the class misunderstands what they have written. "That's not what I *meant*," leads quickly to writing what they do mean.

But however much the journal assignments differ, two things remain constant. Students are always asked to make their journals more than simple diaries: "Today I got up at seven o'clock and had pancakes for breakfast. The bus didn't come and I was late to biology class. Nothing much happened at work . . ." and so on and so on. Nor does any teacher "correct" the writing. No misspelled word is circled, unless it genuinely can't be deciphered. No commas are inserted and no "awk's" appear in the margin. Instead, questions are asked: "Could you give an example here? I'm not sure what you're saying" or "Have you read Malcolm X's account of how he taught himself to write in prison?" More often, however, the responses take the form of "Sounds like an interesting evening," "Good comparison," or "Why don't you finish the story?" Written conversations take place: teacher question, student answer, teacher answer.

When students are given this much freedom their reactions vary. Some find the experience liberating and write like mad. Others find freedom frightening; they plead to be told what the teacher *wants* them to write, and their first efforts are careful and vacuous. When the members of the class share their writing, however, either by reading or publishing, most of the self-consciousness disappears. The following journal entries may not be typical, since they have been twice selected, first by the students who agreed to share them and second by us for inclusion in this article. Nevertheless, they do show what students who consider themselves "bad in English" can produce when some of their inhibitions are removed.

What is a Policeman

A policeman must be a man of wisdom, vision, and ambition; a before and after dinner speaker, a night owl, a day hawk, and an all night driver, appearing fresh as a lily the next morning. He must learn to sleep on the floor and eat two meals a day so as to economize on his traveling expenses. He must be able to consume gallons of coffee, and have an unlimited capacity for alcoholic beverages, yet never disclose unsteadiness.

He must be able to walk at least eight hours through rain and snow without losing the razor edge crease of his trousers or the mirror like shine of his shoes. In sub-zero weather, he must be able to put on chains or change tires with a smile, singing "Oh, what a beautiful morning." In summer he must work in hot dusty offices without losing his sparkle.

A policeman must love children, dogs, cats, flowers, idle chatter, and parades. He

must be a ladies' man, a model husband, a fatherly father, a devoted son-in-law, a good provider, a faithful churchman, a thrifty spender, a generous host, and a pool shark.

He must also have the curiosity of a cat, the tenacity of a bulldog, the determination of a well-digger, the diplomacy of a philandering husband, the patience of a self-sacrificing wife, the enthusiasm of a teenager, the good humor of a master of ceremonies, the simplicity of a jackass, the tireless energy of a bill collector, and the honesty of a little league umpire.

A general knowledge of criminology would also be helpful.

• • •

Morning
and Truth lies at my feet.
I strike a match
and watch the cold defeat.
It flickers and dies . . .
So I lie
on a bed of grey concrete.
I hear the wailing babe
in the corner building across.
I think of you.
I contemplate.
The nights we've known
were covered with moss
The days with iron sulfate.

• • •

Children are so interesting. Sometimes it seems that I never really noticed children until I had children of my own. Now, whenever I take the time to really be observant of my children, it seems that I am looking at myself reincarnated.

And I suppose that I wonder the same things that my parents probably wondered, and that is: will they be healthy? will they be smart in school? will life for them be pleasant or tragic?

Then there is the little obvious looks on their innocent little faces. The look of bewilderment at new experiences; the look of deception when they try to fool you; and the look of devotion when they need your help. It seems that it is only now that I can understand some of the crazy things, and reactions, that my parents displayed. I remember once when I was about six or so, I broke open my piggy bank and took the money. I also played hooky from school. When I returned home that evening, my father was furious, and he whipped me pretty soundly. Later on that evening when I gave him a handpainted tie he had said he wanted, he cried. At the time, I didn't know that I should have explained that I needed that six dollars, and I had to miss school to go all the way downtown to the store. But what I remember most is the salesman who sold me that ten dollar necktie for six dollars. He probably was a man with children.

The other day I spanked my little girl for dirtying up the kitchen, where she obviously had been trying to cook. And when she gave me that funny looking half-cooked and burnt four layer cake from her "Easy Bake Oven," I cried.

• • •

I remember when I was just learning how to write: putting letters together to make words. I was in the second grade. Our teacher had told us to copy some sentences out of a book. I noticed that some of the sentences had a little round dot at the end. I didn't know that it was suppose to be like that. So, I figured if I made mine that small, she wouldn't be able to see it. So I made mine about this big ●. When she

collected the papers and started to look at them, she saw mine and all the big "periods" I had made. She held my paper up so the whole class could see it. Then she criticized it. In my mind, I can see her standing in the middle of the room saying "I told you to put periods at the end of the sentences, not a great big black ●." Those were her exact words. She didn't give me a chance to explain; she didn't ask me why either. My feelings were hurt because she had picked my paper to make fun of. All the other kids laughed at me. I remember trying to hold backed the tears but I couldn't help but to cry. Even my twin sister laughed at me, which seemed to make it worse. I guess the word for it is embarrassed, but all I knew then was that I had been hurt and I hated my teacher for doing it.

Journals are not graded, and we talk about why we don't grade them. Does one grade magazine articles, or love letters, or notes to the milkman? What does—or should—a grade on writing represent? It's easy enough to grade an arithmetic quiz: if 75 times 12 comes out 830, the answer is clearly "wrong": the retailer who has ordered 75 dozen yo yo's will be displeased when his order is 70 short. It's a good deal harder to decide when the wholesaler's letter of apology is "wrong." Is the letter that begins, "We deeply regret that an order in our shipping department . . ." worth a B or a C or an A? Is it better or worse than the one that starts "We've just been told that your order for 75 dozen yo yo's was 70 short"? What about the one that says "Some damn fool in our shipping department . . ."? But depending on how irate the customer is, and how well the writer knows him, perhaps the damn fool version deserves the A. We'd hate to say any of these are D− beginnings, but we like discussing them in terms of appropriateness and audience.

Writing *can* be judged in quantitative terms, of course. Misspelled words and comma splices and oddities of pronoun reference can all be counted and assigned numerical value. That these are the superficialities of writing, however, is easy enough to demonstrate. One favorite assignment in our department is to ask students to write their names on a slip of paper, hide them at some distance from the classroom, and then write directions clear enough that another student can find the name. "Grading" this assignment is a simple matter; the students do it themselves. If the name is found, the paper succeeds; if it isn't, the paper fails, no matter how neatly or "correctly" it has been written.

A name not found, of course, is not always the writer's fault. The reader can go wrong too. When that problem comes up, students go together to check the directions—a good opportunity to demonstrate that writing, like any kind of communication, is a two-way process. Just as talking requires a listener, writing requires a reader; the only time it's done in a vacuum is in composition classes. As students explain to other students what they "really meant" some of the differences between writing and talking become apparent. The listener can ask questions denied to the reader. The talker can use gestures and scowls to make his meaning clear. Writing must compensate for those missing signals. It's also apparent that the writer must sympathize with the reader's predicament. The student who writes "Make an oblique turn of about 35° north northwest" will not convey much to another student who doesn't understand "oblique" or whose sense of direction is muddled. "Go past the third office door and follow the corridor that angles slightly to the left" will be much clearer to most people.

Even if the words "appropriateness" and "audience" are never mentioned, the point is made.

Aims 4 through 7, all dealing with the nature of language, usually confuse students at the beginning of the semester. These are the ones we deal with indirectly all the time, and certainly we don't succeed in helping every student to "internalize" these concepts. (We don't like the wording much either, but it's quick and easy and the best we have at the moment.) We do make sure, however, that everyone has experienced the ideas in action. Some of us ask students to watch small children using the language, an easy assignment since many of our students have children of their own. Nobody wants to deny that five-year-olds are using language, even though they can't read yet and their writing ability doesn't extend beyond printing their own names.

We emphasize the symbolic nature of language, that no word has any "real" meaning, by playing with nonsense words. Students create and use "words" that have meaning only for them, and as they work with these nonsense words they discover several things about language and especially about English. They notice that the new words they have created are almost always nouns or verbs or adjectives, even though that terminology isn't used. If they attempt to form new prepositions or articles or conjunctions they find themselves in trouble. They notice not only that English has a system, but that the system has already been very thoroughly built into them. They can create a word like "vanloop" and use it with any meaning they choose, but if they create "nvloopv" nobody in the class will be able to say it. They discover, too, that "The vanloop goffled that triggle" is not the same as "The triggle goffled that vanloop," and that everybody in the class instantly knows it isn't the same. They see that understanding English grammar is not a matter of identifying "goffled" as an active verb in the past tense but rather a matter of being able to create those two sentences and knowing the difference between them. Obvious as that discovery may seem, it's an enormous comfort to most of our students, and any of them who know a second language go on to discover some of the structural differences between English and Spanish or Korean.

Furthermore, realizing that language does change helps to destroy the notion that there is any absolute "correctness." We don't belabor the formal history of the language, but many of us play a record that offers four or five versions of the Lord's Prayer, from the Ninth Century to the present; many of us send students to explore the *OED;* many of us compare the slang or the street language of the twenties and forties and seventies. Students go on a hunt for new words, not words new to them but words their grandparents don't know, or for old words, terms their grandparents might have used that sound strange today. All these discoveries can be recorded in "papers," speculated on in journal entries, or merely shared in class. They are, however, discoveries that any student can make, and they have more than once led to our students indignantly demanding in PTA meetings why their own children are not being told the truth about language.

When the subject of dialect comes up we try to be honest with our students. Often we begin with the most obvious differences, regional variations in pro-

nunciation, and analyze our reactions to speakers from Georgia or Boston or even Oxford, as exemplified in British films. Then we go on to a comparison of syntactical differences: double negatives, missing "ed's," variant ways of indicating more than one. Is the problem failure to understand, unwillingness to understand, or just snobbery? We talk about situation, and prestige, and, again, about the relationship between talking and writing. Is it any harder for one speaker to decode the symbols O/U/G/H/T as the word "ought" than for another speaker? We talk about the inexact fit between letter symbols and sound symbols, but we also notice that for almost all of us, whatever our dialect, the system works. We do some role playing with language, and try to guess from the language choices (vocabulary, syntax, and assumed pronunciation) who the speaker is trying to represent. We look at advertisements and political speeches and cartoons. We try to understand.

In addition to talking about how "incorrect" people are when they talk about "incorrectness," we try to show how "incorrectness" is inevitably linked to class/race/sex distinctions. Even though "Everybody bring their money tomorrow" is clear and natural to most speakers, and more blessed by actual occurrence than "Everybody bring his money tomorrow," it is not blessed by the usage panel of the American Heritage Dictionary (Bishop Pike & Co.) Our students hopefully see by the end of the semester that the "correct" version is sexually vicious and feeds the sexism that males and females alike are victims of. When students come from 101 class they are hopefully aware that "incorrect" forms like "ain't got no" are "wrong" *only* because the form discriminates (or used to discriminate) between your better class of people and the rest of us ordinary types. We do not try to duck the social realities, however. That is, we do say that even though somebody is a bigot when they "correct" a person's speech or their writing, that bigot might be in a position to pass or fail the student, to approve or disapprove a recommendation, to give or refuse a job. Whether the student decides to fight or switch, however, is entirely up to him . . . ? her . . . ? them . . . ?

Aims 8 and 9—write vigorously and directly, and support generalizations with specific examples—are met with varying degrees of success, and we realize ourselves that they are among the most general, unspecific, and flaccid of our aims. Experience convinces us, however, that students who care about what they are writing, and who have stopped worrying about superficialities, will write more directly and vigorously than students who are trying to placate teachers by the avoidance of error.

That a student's writing may be clear, direct, and vigorous in the English class, and muddy, vague, and tentative on a history exam has caused us some problems with teachers in other divisions. The old cry, "Why don't you teach them to *write*!" periodically surfaces. One answer, not a very kind one, is "Why don't *you* learn to *read*?" A better, and fairer, answer to sociology and history and biology teachers who are sincerely trying to overlook dialect variations is to point out that what seems like "bad writing" may be merely a human attempt to conceal the fact that the student has nothing to say on that question. The writing is muddy and vague because the understanding is muddy and vague.

Some English teachers have met in the evenings with members of other divisions and examined samples of student writing done for other courses. Often it is as garbled and vague as the history teachers think it is, but sometimes the difficulty can be easily straightened out. One paper, which seemed at first reading to be totally incoherent, turned out to be clear and well written when the list of twenty questions which constituted the assignment were inserted between the sentences of the answer. Reminding the student to repeat the questions, or embody them in the answers, made the difference between sense and nonsense, but it hadn't occurred to the social science teacher to give his classes that explanation.

1973, of course, was an excellent year for talking about language in practice, a year when it became perfectly clear that simply asserting a generalization made it not only reality but a criminal or unpatriotic act to ask for specific support. From the politician's promise to remove the burden of taxes from the man in the street without discussing the effect reduced taxes would have on welfare payments, street repair, or hungry children, to the White House's continuing promise to eradicate crime without any discussion of whether erasing tapes, evading income tax, or authorizing burglary were considered "crimes," the year provided a surfeit of examples. The choices were endless, and we found our students could find their own examples almost as quickly and easily as the politicians could produce them. Identifying unsupported generalizations in what other people say or write isn't, naturally, the same as avoiding them in your own writing; it is a step toward it, however, and if it is backed up by others in the class demanding examples or definitions for statements such as "Working mothers neglect their children" or "Abortion is murder," providing the examples or definitions may become a habit.

The final aim, practice in expository writing, normally takes care of itself. It is included in the aims to remind teachers that the first semester of composition must be more than an outpouring of pent-up frustrations.

This past semester the Composition I teachers started a program to help each other by dividing up into teams of four. Each of the four had at least one section. The teams were to meet regularly, try to schedule some class visits for each other, and maybe even experiment with some team teaching. The program was something less than a spectacular success—sort of a Kahoutek. People became self-conscious about having their classes visited by somebody else—the old idea that a teacher's class is his castle. People are busy, and it was hard to schedule weekly get-togethers, but another thing possibly contributing to the fizzle was the unusual notion that teachers might have something to say to each other once a week or so about what they were (or weren't) succeeding with in class. We're going to go ahead this semester again, and perhaps as we get more practice in sharing teaching ideas, we'll begin to take the sharing as one of our professional responsibilities.

One final comment about first semester composition: we do have a handful of "Black Emphasis" courses. They were originally set up to accommodate those students who felt they had special needs which couldn't be met in the more typically integrated classes. As years pass, the demand for these sections decreases, and perhaps when all our courses (as well as some of the local society)

rid themselves of the effects of racism, we will no longer feel that courses of this type are necessary.

Freshman Comp II

Until about two years ago, the second semester of English composition was fairly traditional, with more emphasis given to rhetorical modes, some practice in critical writing, some attention to reading literature—well, in truth, what happened in the second semester was largely a matter of teacher preference. Partly in an attempt to make something out of nothing much, or out of everything, and partly in response to the criticism that we weren't really giving students what they wanted, we developed what we refer to as a modular program. Actually, what we have done is to divide second semester composition into three periods of five weeks each and offer students a wide choice as to what they will study in those short courses. We have this spring some fifty-five separate short courses; in the fall we had forty-two. To get credit for Composition II a student must successfully complete three of the modules. There are no limits on the choices that students can make, but most choose to take one module each five week period, that is, one during the first five weeks, one during the second, and one during the third. The first five weeks we teach mostly skill-type courses: test taking and paper preparation, writing a term paper, dialect shift, nursing notes, sentence manipulation, and the like. As the semester moves along the modules are more often oriented toward special student interests: women's views, language of film, contemporary black issues, black woman, rhetoric of politics, police and society, and so on. They've improved faculty morale, too:

And Whadda You Do?

"You really teach English, Man? What kind English you teach?"

Talk about a bummer. Fourteen years of teaching English and I still hadn't found a defense against that question, the question that always came after "Whaddya do for a living?"

I used to answer, "Oh, Freshman Composition." The guy behind the bar would look at me with the same look he used on loan sharks and cops looking for free lunch.

"English Composition. Huh. I always hated English. It was my worst subject in school."

Before that I had tried "I teach English Literature." That was worse; once a girl, a girl with serious brown eyes and a pouty lower lip and a gold Ankh ring on her middle finger, pulled her chubby knee away from mine and said:

"O. Beowulf and that stuff." She went to the ladies room and never came back, but the bartender, who had been listening, leaned over and said, "I always hated English. It was my worst subject in school."

Once, in a moment of surrender, I lied. I told a man I was a snake trainer. He tried a couple of "No, really mans" and "Come off its" but I stuck to it; I told him I was a snake trainer, I ran the snake show at the St. Louis Zoo, hadn't he even seen it? It was marvelous.

"People think snakes are cold, but that's just a myth. Actually they're very intelligent and very friendly once you get to know them, not standoffish like elephants or stupid like big cats."

I went home that night glowing. Before the guy had left he had invited me home for dinner, asked me if I'd like to meet his friends, maybe join his bowling team.

The next time I saw him he was talking to the bartender. When I said hello, he avoided my eyes, excused himself and abruptly left. "We were just talking about you," the bartender said. "I told him you were an English teacher and you know what he said?"

"Yeah, I know what he said. He said 'English was my worst subject in school.'"

"You must be psychic or something," the bartender said as he poured.

I thought of medical school, but I was too old, and I knew I could never learn chemistry. Not yet forty, all my options expired, and a long future ahead filled with people asking "What kind of English?" Asking and then waiting smugly.

But things are different now. Here at FPCC we teach a modular composition course with such units as "Police and Society," "Soap Operas," "Playboy Man and Cosmopolitan Woman," "Writing for Money," "Environmental Emphasis" and "The Black Woman."

My problem is not solved yet, but I have a greater confidence, a new aggressiveness. Now when they ask "What kind of English?" I smile smugly and mysteriously, I shrug, I say "Oh, all kinds of English." And I quickly ask, "But what about you? What do you do, man?"

And it's going to get better. I've suggested two new modules to our course committee: "Making Friends in Bars" and "Snake Training."

Joe Salvia
FPCC English teacher

Each module is described in some detail in a booklet produced each semester, telling the students what to expect in terms of course objectives, text costs, grading policies, and class size. The students are given the booklet in the middle of their first semester or at registration, if they didn't take their first semester at Forest Park. They are counseled (but *not* required to follow the advice) about which modules might benefit them. They may take as many as they want, and some do take more than three.

Perhaps the best picture of the program would come from the current edition of the booklet:

How To Register

When you have decided what modules you want to enroll in, you're ready to begin registration. (Remember these modules don't have to be at the same time or by the same teacher.)

See the English Department secretary in room A-238. She will place your name on the roll for your chosen module. (Each module has a maximum enrollment listed in the booklet. Don't wait too long to sign up or the section might be closed.) The secretary will give you two 40.102 cards: one you will keep to be signed by each of your module instructors as you complete a module. The other one you will take to your pre-registration appointment or central registration, where you will trade it for your 102 IBM card. . . .

What To Do If You Don't Get Along Very Well With A Module You're Enrolled In

If you don't complete a module and get a grade you may either re-take the same module if it's offered again or take a different module in its place. This will mean that you may be taking two modules during the same five week period. If you do not complete a module taken during the third five weeks you will have to take a module in the subsequent semester. If you don't finish three modules during the semester you are enrolled in English Comp II, be sure to mention this fact to the department secretary when you enroll for a module in a later semester.

How Many Modules You Can Take

1. You may take only one module during the first five weeks.
2. You make take two modules during either the second or the third five weeks.

Here is a selection from the spring 1974 schedule, together with some sample descriptions.

English Composition II (By Hour)

				I	II	III
40.102.01	8:00– 9:20	TTh	Hoelscher	Test Taking & Paper Prep.	Logical Thinking	Manipulative Tech. of Advertising
.02	9:00– 9:50	MWF	Craig	Manipulative Tech. of Ad.	Logical Thinking	Writing Poetry
.03	9:00– 9:50	MWF	Margulis	Writing Explanation	Term Paper Writing	Slant
.04	9:00– 9:50	MWF	Salvia	Editorials	Creative Writing	Writing for Money
.05	9:00– 9:50	MWF	Watt	Spelling	Letter Writing	Formal Essay
.06	9:30–10:50	TTh	Hoelscher	Test Taking & Paper Prep.	Logical Thinking	Language of Film
.07	9:30–10:50	TTh	Friedrich	Term Paper Writing	Story Writing	Writing Poetry
.08	9:30–10:50	TTh	Siegel	Nursing Notes & Medical Terms	Report Writing	Book Reviews
.09	9:30–10:50	TTh	Salvia	Revising Papers	Vocabulary	Autobiography
.10	10:00–10:50	MWF	A. Harris	Nursing Notes & Medical Terms	Vocabulary	*Playboy* Man & Cosmopolitan Woman

TITLE: Research Methods or How to Avoid Getting Lost in the Library
OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTION: This course is designed as a pre-requisite for the module on Writing Term Papers. Any student, however, should benefit from its emphasis on effective use of all library facilities. Students will learn to locate library materials easily, to interpret book catalog and index entries, and to use such non-book sources as periodicals, newspapers, government documents, and the vertical file. They will also become familiar with basic research and reference tools in order to know where to go for specific kinds of information.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students will be expected to complete several library exercises designed to help meet course objectives. In addition, they will prepare

a multi-source bibliography on a topic of their choosing. This bibliography will be used by those electing to take the term paper module.
GRADING POLICY: Grades of A, B, C, W, or Inc. will be based upon competence displayed in fulfilling course requirements.
TEXT: no textbook required.
ENROLLMENT LIMIT: 25

TITLE: Soap Operas
OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTION: To discuss, analyze, and write about the soap opera phenomenon. We will watch video-taped "soaps" and attempt to analyze their appeal by examining character types, conventions, and literary and dramatic forerunners.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students will be required to submit at least three written works (this is subject to negotiation) either chiefly analytical or satirical, or, if the student is inclined, he she may with to produce either a script for a day's show or a plot synopsis for a projected serial. Two conferences with the teacher. You don't have to like soap operas or if you do, you don't have to admit it, but it might be interesting to find out why people (not just "frustrated housewives") watch regularly.
GRADING POLICY: Students grade self
TEXT: Current issues of *Daytime TV* and *TV Dawn Til Dusk*
ENROLLMENT LIMIT: 25

If you're wondering how such a program is administered, it's all done with a bunch of little 3 x 5 cards. The administration agreed that such a program might be worth trying provided it didn't put any more strain on the registrar's office. So it was up to the department to figure a way to register a couple of thousand students in three courses each and make sure that they not only got where they were going but that the department knew where to be to meet them. There is, of course, the additional problem that each student gets three grades which have to be averaged to make a final grade—and the three grades are likely to be given by three different teachers, sometimes in more than one semester. That's where the cards come in. Each student fills out two copies of a 102 card which shows the titles of the modules they're taking, who's teaching them, where they meet, and what time. (This is usually done with the advice of the 101 instructor but at registration we have a raft of English teachers available to advise those folks who haven't heard about our 102 program yet.) The students turn in one of the cards in exchange for the magic IBM class card which gets their names on OFFICIAL CLASS LISTS. Then during the first class meetings of each module, the teachers collect the other copies of the cards and make class lists for each module. Copies of the class lists are checked by the department's secretary against the OFFICIAL CLASS LISTS authored by IBM. Discrepancies are ruthlessly hunted down; it's awfully important that the records be kept straight for the sake of the students, many of whom are on GI bill or some other program which requires that they report success in a given number of courses.

At the end of each module, each teacher gives back the students' cards with the grades and hands in a grade list to the secretary, who records them on the set of duplicate cards kept in the office and gets ready for the next batch to come in. At the end of the semester, then, all the secretary has to do is average out the several thousand grades, track down the teachers who haven't remembered

to grade some of their students, and put the averaged grades for each student on the OFFICIAL GRADE LIST to be sent back to IBM. Obviously such a system calls for an unusually well-organized and dedicated secretary. If you're thinking about trying such a program yourself, be sure you take a close look at your own secretary in terms that go beyond his or her typing and shorthand skills.

Being Department Secretary

Before I came to Forest Park, I had never met people who cared so much and took action to show it. They all seem to have one common interest: to help those who need help and especially those who ask for it, in whatever way they can. What makes this even better is that it goes outside the classroom, off the campus grounds and into the home as well.

I was scared and insecure when I first started working here. Mostly because I didn't know if I could live up to the job expectations, and partly because I had never worked with so many white people before. The one thing that started me toward overcoming this insecurity was the English classes, Comp. I and II. They helped me to discover more of me, and let me release that which I was already aware of but afraid to let go. They were trusting themselves with me, and when I felt their trust, I could trust. I realized that was my fear.

It will be three years in July, 1974, that I have been working with them. After my fear was gone, I was free to go ahead and try. I did. I'm still trying. I try to be better and better at my job every day. Sometimes it gets a little frustrating. About 40% of my job is dealing directly with the instructors: sending out memos, phone messages, typing articles for circulation, and sending out class lists. Some of the material that is sent out requests a return, or some sort of reply. Then I have to go nag 'em a couple of times, and sometimes I have to catch them by the tail feathers. But they take it with a smile, and I have whatever I'm after soon afterwards.

Of course, we're all only human. We all have our ups and downs, sometimes they show, sometimes they don't, sometimes they clash. But toward the end of the semester when I walk down the hall and look at the same classes that had stiff-sitting students, with teeth gritted behind tightly closed lips, and worse of all, those clenched fingers around their pencil, and see relaxed bodies moving freely about—and the teacher somewhere in the middle with students tugging from all sides—I feel I have helped this come about in some way or another, from typing a student paper to meeting a class for an instructor. I just feel like trying harder. I'm proud of them and proud to say I work with them. And I figure it's worth it all.

Robbie R. Manson
Secretary, English Department

In spite of the effort that goes into it, the program is not free of problems. Some are: the students don't have nearly the range of choices it appears they have. The evening students, particularly, are crimped for time. Furthermore, it depends a good deal on the counsellors as to whether the students get their English picked out first, and thus have the widest possible choice, or get their schedules filled out and then fill in their English, which usually leaves them with a limited choice of the nine modules at 12:30 Tuesday/Thursday or the three at 8:00 Monday/Wednesday/Friday.

Less serious, but worth considering, is that teachers are sometimes asked to teach courses with which they are neither familiar or sympathetic. This happens when the pressures of enrollment force us to make schedule changes at the last minute. But again, as the program matures, we are developing a considerable

file of materials to help teachers cope with this kind of emergency. To balance that problem, each teacher has a shot at teaching a module in which he or she has a special interest. Legal Language is taught by a graduate of Harvard Law School; Writing for Money is taught by a professional writer; and Women's Views is taught by an active member of the College Committee for Sexual Equality.

Some side effects, expected and unexpected: fewer complaints from other parts of the college that we aren't teaching "real" English; extra credit for any student who wants to learn a particular skill or has some special interest to pursue or needs one more hour to graduate. Such students enroll for an hour's credit under "Special Problems in . . ." Students can, in effect, make their own syllabus for the semester and thus share some responsibility for what goes on. And we get even more flexibility than was anticipated, because changing the booklet every semester enables us to drop modules with little appeal and add new ones that students or teachers want.

Finally, the 102 modules are based on the expectation that students have mastered the concepts and attitudes expressed in the first semester's aims. This gives us a fairly well integrated two-semester course of study—flexible, structured, and with a maximum of student choice.

During the summer following the first year we used the program, the chairperson of the course committee was given released time to evaluate the program. She used a student questionnaire and interviewed all the teachers who had taught in the program. Unfortunately, tabulation of responses to that questionnaire are not yet available. The district's data processing machinery is not always cooperative, and it has been known to take more than a year for its operators to coax it into performing. The interviews with the teachers, which didn't depend on machinery, came through right away, and fortunately the course chairperson had read enough of the student answers to get some notion of their reaction, and we are therefore left with the impression that the program is liked and is accomplishing its task.

The Modular Program—An Evaluation

At the end of the first semester that modular scheduling was used in the 102 program, all the students enrolled in English Comp II sections were surveyed to determine their specific responses to a number of elements involved in the program, from scheduling problems through major likes or gripes with the new setup.

Students at FPCC are pleased with the modular scheduling as we use it in the second semester of comp. They're pleased because they have more say about what they're going to be taught, because there is more variety in subject matter, because there is less chance to get bored, and because they can get away from courses or teachers that turn out to be less than they expected without losing credit or money or waiting sixteen weeks. And they believe that the education they're getting is, as a result, better because it is more suited to their particular needs and interests. As one student wrote when asked what, if any, were the advantages of the module system, "I have different interests, so different classes. Different teachers—different ideas. You get more. It helps me decide what I want to do."

Even cynics found something to praise: "If you get an instructor or a course you don't like, it only lasts five weeks." Whether students commented favorably because they felt they were studying things of particular interest to them or because the

program gave them a chance to get out of an unsatisfactory situation fast, they were consistent in seeing the program as one that aimed to meet their needs first.

Not surprisingly, one of the most common complaints about the program stems from what many students cited as the major advantage: the brevity and variety of the courses. Some felt that their interests were teased only to be interrupted by a switch to a new module. "Five weeks is really not long enough; you may start to like a course and it will be over before you know it." Another disadvantage students pointed out stemmed from the restrictions placed on their selection by scheduling: "I really couldn't take what I wanted, only what was offered at my time period." While this is a very real problem, especially here where most students are limited by work schedules or household responsibilities, it's a problem all students face. No matter how many exciting courses appear in a catalog, only a limited number are actually available to any one student in any one semester. Because of this complaint, we are trying to move to more block scheduling: offering more sections of 102 at a single time slot so that a student really has a better chance to take advantage of the variety of courses taught.

While some students saw real advantage in escaping from an instructor after only five weeks, others felt that the teaching was, in fact, better because of the time restrictions. "I think that teachers really teach better because they have only five weeks to get it together." This feeling was mirrored by the teachers in the department, who were also interviewed after the first semester of modular scheduling. As one faculty member said, "It makes for more efficient teaching." Another remarked, "It's specific: both you and the student know what you are to do."

The teachers are just as pleased with the variety of offerings as the students, both because of the benefit to the students and because of the personal rewards in teaching in the program. "This is probably the soundest approach to second semester composition because it gives students a maximum choice and gives teachers a chance to work in their specialties." Some were pleased to be teaching in a program that didn't allow them to become lazy by teaching the same course again and again. One instructor said he felt that the greatest advantage of the program was to him personally because it kept him new and "plugged into new things."

Though the faculty were unanimous in disliking the increased paperwork—three class lists and sets of grades to report where there used to be one— most felt that this inconvenience was just that, an inconvenience, not a major problem. The potential for a personally designed writing program for each student, and the chance for the student to decide upon that program for him herself, seemed to far outweigh the minor aggravations.

Angela Harris Kuester
FPCC English Teacher

Journalism

In addition to our 101-2 sequence, a student who is interested in more writing is likely to be advised to see our journalism instructor. The official descriptions of "Introduction to Journalism" and "Applied Journalism" currently published in Forest Park's catalog make the courses sound quite conventional:

> 40.112. Journalism. 3 credits. Study and practice in newspaper techniques including the writing of news stories, features, and sports.
> 40.113. Applied Journalism. 3 credits. Practical experience working on college newspaper under professional guidance.

These two restrained sentences belie the reality of the excitement that actually goes on in the journalism department, rapidly expanding from two fairly ordinary courses, not very popular, to a fully fledged "career" program. The instruc-

tor will move from being part-time to full-time in the next school year. (She's been working as hard as anybody around here for about two years now; it takes awhile to get established in a place like this and meantime we've been exploiting her beyond belief.) The following two memos give a more accurate flavor of what's going on in journalism:

To: Dick Friedrich
From: Kathe Dunlop
Re: Progress of third semester students
So far, a number of our students have been very successful in finding work related to their interest in journalism . . . .
I. Gail Edwards presently holds an internship with the St. Louis black magazine "Proud," and has related that she is enjoying her duties.
II. John Moore (a former graduate) has been recently appointed editor of the "Mill Creek Valley Intelligencer." Working along with John on this paper are three students presently in their third semester of journalism . . . . they are: Albert Marshall, Joe Grimes, & Dan Hogan.

* * *

To: Dick
From: Kathe
Re: journalism stuff
Here, in no particular order, are some things that are going on in journalism—
I have been named membership chairman for the Missouri Chapter of the Junior College Journalism Association. We are holding our first meeting here at FPCC on Nov. 17. (We had the meeting on Dec. 8 and I am now secretary-treasurer.)
The J-school at MU has asked us if we would participate in a journalism program for minority students sponsored by the Newspaper Fund, a national foundation supported by major newspapers. This is still tentative, but if it comes through, would mean minority newspapermen working in our classrooms with students on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. We would be the first junior college in the country to have the program.
We have two students doing internships this semester: Reginald Whitaker is working with Bob Buck of KMOX-TV in sports broadcasting. Reginald has written some stories that Buck has read on the air. Kurt Kahle is working with the new *St. Louis Today*. (One of our alumni, John Moore, is contributing editor of *St. Louis Today*.)
The Urban Corps, the section of the Urban League that supervises off-campus work study students, has asked if some of our students would be interested in putting out a newsletter for work study students. There is a meeting about this possibility with the Urban League, our financial aid people, Sol Rabushka, myself and a student Thurs. Nov. 15 at 9:00 p.m. in Room U 107. (This is still hanging because of some problems with work study eligibility for the two students, Fred Jackson and Kathy O'Malley.)
Tommye Fleming has sent out copies of the *People's Press* [the college newspaper] along with a letter about our journalism program, to all St. Louis city high schools.
Lindenwood College says they will transfer our j-courses as journalism credits and do we have some Black students who would like scholarships. We're planning a trip for students who might be interested.
I'm going to chair a publications workshop at the convention in Omaha in March.
Sammie Jones, a night journalism student, is doing an internship this semester, probably at KMOX-TV.
I'll keep filling you in as things keep happening.

Kathe Dunlop
FPCC journalism teacher

If these two memos don't make it clear that applied journalism involves more than "practical experience working on college newspaper under professional

guidance," it's worth noting that the same class has been responsible this year for editing, laying out, and producing a new magazine called "*Do You Know Where We're Coming From—Writings by Students at Forest Park.*" The original plan was for monthly publication but, owing to a certain confusion in communication between the editors and the printers, the first issue was delayed for a month. Everybody shrugged and pitched in to do it over—a practical lesson in asking the right questions. Unlike the more literary creative writing magazine, *Persona*, which has been published every spring since the college opened and which will also involve journalism much more than in the past, the new publication contains only work done by students in English composition. Photo offset from typed copy, it is illustrated by sketches provided by students in the Art Department and sold in the bookstore at cost (15¢). Entries are submitted by composition teachers and hopefully the magazine provides students with a chance to see their work published; it serves as an excellent and immediate text for use in first semester composition; and it gives everybody involved—journalism students, composition students, and art students—an opportunity to be doing something "real."

In addition to this regular forty-hour "part-time" job, the journalism instructor is currently doing a survey among the local industries to see whether graduates from her program might be hired to produce what industry calls "house organs." Aside from the above, about all she does is develop those internship programs for her students and hustle about the state working out articulation programs with the four-year colleges.

Lit Courses

Literature courses are marked by the same commitment to involvement as the composition courses are. Our enrollment in literature has always been fairly light, since for most students intending to transfer to four-year schools in the midwest, literature is regarded as a second year course. However, given the way our students drop in and out of school from semester to semester, we have stopped requiring a year of composition, or anything else, as prerequisite for any literature course. The writing the students are likely to be doing in our literature courses is wide: they may be producing their own efforts or they may be keeping journals in which they react to what they have read. Last year one journal contained a twenty-page astrological chart working out Whitman's horoscope. Almost every first semester survey of English literature produces a modernized version of Swift's "Modest Proposal." One teacher has a lot of success having his English literature classes do dramatic productions of such things as "Gawain and the Green Knight" or highly modernized, adumbrated versions of "The Second Shepherd's Play" and "Hamlet." Listening to good recordings of poetry and plays, "Paradise Lost," for instance, or "Everyman," is more rewarding for most students than working through the literature on their own. The idea is that students learn about literature by hearing it or taking part in it rather than by analyzing it; the hope is that they will be able to see some relationship between the literature they read, or hear, or act out, and their own

lives. We are convinced that more students have increased their understanding by comparing Beowulf and Superman than have ever benefitted by memorizing the definition of kenning.

We offer two semesters of English literature survey and one semester of American literature, but most of our literature students enroll in a course called "Introduction to Literature," one semester of which covers short stories and novels, the other poetry and drama. A good example of the approach one teacher uses is the pair of slide presentations created by teams of students in a short story section. What the teams of students did was shoot several rolls of 35 mm. slides from which they selected the ones they felt most appropriate to two short stories as they understood them: Steinbeck's "Chrysanthemums" and Wright's "Big Boy Leaves Home." Once the slide selections had been made, the students synchronized the slides with a sound track in which members of the teams spoke what they felt were the significant lines. What they came up with indicated that they had not only understood, in depth, what the stories mean, but that they had made satisfying works of art on their own.

In a poetry class a mixed group of students, most of whom arrived with a cultivated distaste for poetry, began with finding poems they liked—any poems, no matter how bad critics would consider them—and went on to writing poetry themselves. Everybody felt the class had gotten somewhere when one of the women, who had sat expressionless in the corner for half the semester, suddenly said, in a poem of her own, "This is the day the poets meet."

Such classes are not easy to teach, since we try to make them reflect all aspects of American life and literature, not just that lived or produced in New York and Boston, and sanctified by time and the critics. Very few of us have had any formal training in Chicano, Asian-American, or even black literature, but we have been greatly helped by careful attention to *Searching for America* [see the National Council of Teachers of English] and by some released time projects produced by our own staff members. We do, in conjunction with the Department of Afro-American Studies, offer one course called "Modern Black Writers," but most of us are convinced that white students need such courses more than black students do, and we would rather see all our literature courses totally integrated, both as to students and as to content.

Advanced Placement

The big majority of our students actually want to take English. They are convinced it will help them on the job, in their other classes, or just in talking to people, and they want that help. Consequently, the feeling of coercion and boredom that mars compulsory composition at some colleges is largely missing at Forest Park. We do have some people, however, who are eager to accumulate the most possible credits in the shortest possible time for the least possible amount of money, so every semester we get ten or fifteen requests for exemption. Although the district as a whole offers CLEP (the highly advertised College Level Examination Program which includes a general subject matter test on composition), we don't use the composition section at Forest Park because

it doesn't measure what we teach, nor does it tell us whether students can write. In our view, it measures whether people can identify superficial lapses in language etiquette, and we'd rather find out whether our students can recognize those aspects of language as superficialities.

Nevertheless, nobody wants to spend a semester teaching people things they already know, so we have devised our own test, which comes in two parts: an objective test which, we hope, finds out whether students have some general understanding of the nature of language, and a forty-minute writing sample. Everybody seeking exemption takes both parts of the test, but unless there's a score of 90 or better on the agree/disagree part, we don't read the papers. It is not impossible to pass; two or three students manage it each semester. Here is an excerpt from the test we use:

DIRECTIONS: Check the column marked "Agree" if you think the statement is accurate and acceptable. If you think it is inaccurate and unacceptable, check the column marked "Disagree." If you have no opinion, leave both columns empty.

Mark the test according to what you believe, and what you think you could defend from your own experience, rather than according to the kind of answer you think an English teacher might expect.

1. Do these two statements communicate the same meaning? "The policeman fire four shot last night." "The policeman fired four shots last night."
2. In the sentence, "The policeman fire four shot last night," the absence of the -ed on *fire* makes it impossible to tell when the shots were fired.
3. In the same sentence, the absence of the -s on *shot* makes it impossible to tell whether one shot or more than one shot was fired.
4. Spelling errors make it impossible to understand this sentence: "Their were fore planes an to hellycoppers in the sky."
5. The sentence, "Drive alert in Illinois" should read "Drive alertly in Illinois" because adverbs must end in -ly.
6. In present-day English, whether the speaker uses *shall* or *will* shows whether he is strongly determined or whether he means something will happen in the future.
7. Once you know what the history of a word is, you can be sure what its only real meaning is.
8. In the sentence, "John ordered a cool glass of lemonade," "*cool*" is used according to its real meaning: in the sentence, "It was a cool party," "*cool*" is incorrectly used.
9. Most people see experience according to the categories their native language has set up for them.
10. An English teacher's main job is to correct students when they make mistakes in speaking or writing.
11. The way most native Americans speak English is built into them before they start to school.
12. "Whacha gonna do?" represents normal speech sounds as accurately as "What are you going to do?"
13. Sometimes sentences without verbs make for effective writing. That is, "Suddenly fire exploded through the roof. Leaping, crackling fire, billows of heavy swirling smoke, a choking acid smell as though all air had disappeared" is at least as effective as "Suddenly fire exploded through the roof. There was leaping, crackling fire. There were billows of heavy swirling smoke. There was a choking acid smell as though all air had disappeared."
14. English spelling never follows any pattern.

15. It's a mistake to say, "That was an awful hamburger" because *awful* really means full of awe. . . .
86. There is no kind or level of English which will sound good to everybody or bad to everybody under all conditions.
87. Language is an arbitrary, symbolic system of sounds by which human beings communicate.
88. When almost everybody makes the same "mistake" in language usage, it should no longer be considered a mistake.
89. The English teacher who said, "Words that are considered obscene in your neighborhood may be quite acceptable in mine," is disregarding proper standards of decency.
90. Correcting students whose dialect differs from that of the teacher will help them write with greater confidence and clarity.
91. The man who says, "Baby, when I say you *bad*, that's *good*," damages the integrity of the English language.
92. Saying, "Baby, when I say you *bad*, that' *good*," is misleading.
93. Using the word "pacification" in reference to the bombing of a town is misleading.
94. Punctuation symbols are inadequate to represent the pauses, emphasis, and shifts in pitch that help to convey meaning in spoken English.
95. Preferring "She is working" to "She be working" is linguistic snobbery.
96. Any vocabulary based IQ test is a reliable measure of a person's intelligence.
97. The question, "Why did you bring the book I wanted to be read to out of up for?" would probably be clearer spoken than written.
98. Probably the only difference in talking to someone from twenty feet away and from six inches away is a difference in volume.
99. The statement, "He was not unwilling to accept the position," is bad English because it contains a double negative.
100. There is no necessary connection between a word and the thing it stands for: that is, a shoe could just as well be called an "ooblick".

We've had some complaints that the test is biased, that it discriminates against students who have had good traditional training in conventional English classes, but we can live with that complaint, since so many of the nationally standardized tests have been so openly biased for so long against so many of our students. Besides, if students' notions about language are that conventional, they badly need the course we offer. The chairman of the advanced placement committee is probably in the best position to describe the general reaction.

Advanced Placement

Most of the people who try the exam have language attitudes that are the opposite of the ones the objective section looks for. Usually students who hear about the test assume it will allow them to demonstrate their knowledge of traditional grammar, a misconception that leads to conversations like this one:

Student: I hear there's a way to test out of English comp. I'd like to try it since most of the students in my section don't speak English very well.

Department Head: Are they foreigners?

At FPCC we have many nursing students who come from our own nursing program and from local hospitals, as well as students in allied health fields; these students generally stick together and help each other in subjects outside their career programs. Imagine the extra time these students would have to devote to courses in their fields if they could test out of English comp! When the test was first given, a few students in these career courses attempted to obtain copies of the objective test—

"What an interesting test! I'd like to talk over some of the questions with my husband."—presumably for the use of other students in their field as well as for themselves.

But even if these students had obtained copies of the test, they might not have been able to figure out the answers. Almost every time the test is given, someone will say, "There really isn't any answer to some of these qustions," meaning questions like the one that reads: "Even though most Americans say 'It's me' they ought to say 'It is I.' "

I usually reply that this test is based on the composition course given in this department in this school. We are finding out whether or not the students know what language attitudes are taught in our courses. If they do know, then they can place out.

Larry Skinner
FPCC English teacher

For the essay part of the test, applicants are given a choice of topics, and what they write is read by at least three members of the committee, more if there is disagreement. Currently, people who want to avoid composition are given these directions:

Write an essay on *one* of the following topics:

1. Write to me: tell me what your favorite radio station is and why you think it's so good.
2. President Nixon ran for office saying that he intended to "bring the country together." Write to him telling him how well you think he has done this.
3. Write to the President of Forest Park Community College telling him what it's been like getting to be an FPCC student. Feel free to make any suggestions you want.
4. What are your plans for yourself at FPCC? What are you doing here? What good do you think it will do you to go here?
5. If you like, draw a new animal; then write an accompanying description of the animal's habits, personality, etc. It doesn't matter if you can't draw well—and if you like, you can just do the writing part of this and skip the drawing.

And here are two papers that put their writers directly into the second semester:

What am I doing here at Forest Park Community College? After all, I'm 38 years old, been away from school for 22 years, and have pretty well established my "life routine" both marital and job-wise. Well, as far as my age is ~~concerned, I~~ don't personally believe that the aging process has anything to do with a person's ability or desire to learn. Lengthy ~~lapses~~ between periods of "formal" education may dull one's capacity to study, but I think desire and determination will overcome this handicap. Marital status can cause some time related problems, but nothing that can't be overcome with the help of an understanding wife. So now we get down to the nitty-gritty: THE JOB.

I am a fire-fighter enrolled in the Fire Protection Technology Course. I strongly feel that my job requires an awful lot of knowledge in what we sometimes call "job related fields." For example: *chemical* nature of fire, *electrical* hazards of fire-fighting, *hydraulics* involved in fire-fighting, etc. My plans, needless to say, are to gain as much knowledge as possible in these, and other fields.

Besides wanting to gain knowledge, there exists another motive for being here: JOB ADVANCEMENT. The trend in the fire service today is *not* what it used to be. Time was when experience was the sole criteria for advancement (combined with a certain amount of "politics"). Today, however, promotion depends a lot on experience combined with education. As time goes by, I look for more and more emphasis to be placed on education. What I am actually doing is trying to prepare myself for the future.

I truly believe that my experience *combined* with the knowledge I am gaining here at FPCC will help me move up the ranks in the Fire Service.

All in all, I am enjoying my studies, and have found them to be beneficial. And although being a student does pose some problems for me, I believe the personal satisfaction & possible rewards more than compensate for the few difficulties I've encountered.

. . .

My job is that of an Linguo-Zoologist. I have been asked to expound on my discovery of "the gork." The reader will take notice that I have taken no opportunity to express my discovery as a physical, symbolic representation. That is, a drawing. My reasons for doing so will become apparent in the course of this discourse. WAKE UP!

When I was a young man embarking upon my career I once took a test. A test to extricate myself from the busywork (etc.) of English Comp I. A very interesting test this was. Two parts—the second an essay on the discovery of a new animal. More busywork, but the first part, I dug it. One hundred statements to which I was to disagree. Or agree, as the case went. And so do I: Here I give the reader several choice examples.

"It's always wrong to use a preposition to end a sentence with."

"You shouldn't ever use contractions in any form of written English."

"It's usually better to use big words rather than ordinary words."

(Here I am about to use a metaphor and it's not in poetry, so there.)

Here I must confess. A gork is not a "real" animal. It's a metaphorical animal. A Gork is a linguistic representation of a feeling, a human emotion. This emotion is caused in your author by . . . (a good word would be fruit) . . . fruit self contradictions. And, by no means self contradictions alone—leading questions and statements also qualify.

Now the question that came to my mind was this:

"Why am I being asked these questions??????"

Do they want the "right" answers? do they want how I really feel? for what purpose? Well, I debated upon these queries, and set upon myself a course of action. I decided to answer as I really felt. And it was hard. Frequently I found myself wanting to answer sarcastically. For example to answer "agree" to the above questions. Which brings me to the actual meaning of "Gork."

"Gork" is a mixture of several feelings. One, the sarcastic feeling mentioned previously.

Second is my feeling that language is what it is. Language is what people use. No right or wrong. Which is not to deny that there are certain times and places where certain manners of speech are more appropriate. There is no *universal* right. And I'll write the way I darn well please.

The third is hunger. I'll go to lunch now, so . . . see ya later.

How the Department Operates

What goes on in our department has not come about by fiat, or by chance. The college that opened ten years ago was dedicated to experiment and change, and it received considerable publicity for its claims to innovation. Whether or not its new English Department was doing anything startlingly different from what was going on in a number of other two-year schools, the department hired people who wanted change, and who knew the direction they wanted those changes to take. The philosophy that evolved has been a mutual philosophy. Somebody makes a suggestion, two or three people take it up, a small committee

(either impromptu or official) plays with it a little more, and then the whole department argues and re-argues it, and polishes it into final form.

It isn't always smooth going. In fact, it seldom is, since most of our staff were chosen for independence, obstinacy, and vocal ability. But they were chosen, too, for some shared beliefs: that tradition doesn't hallow much; that a community college is an exciting place to be; that composition, as we define it, is an exciting subject to teach; and that our students, regardless of where the Scholastic Aptitude Test ranks them, can learn to write not just competently but well. It's those shared beliefs that enable us to hammer out policies and procedures that everybody follows whether or not they subscribe to the details. It was another shared belief, that every teacher in the department should have as much say as anybody else as to what the department does or doesn't do, and a healthy suspicion that right should be guaranteed, that led to the creation, three years ago, of a set of operating procedures which were, in the usual way, argued, re-argued, polished in open meeting, and finally adopted.

The procedures define membership as including "anyone who teaches a class in English at FPCC . . . including interns of all sorts." They suggest monthly business meetings, called by the head of the department with at least three school days advance notice (but he sometimes calls them oftener than that), define a quorum as two-thirds of the full-time members, including proxies, and include what, for our inconoclastic department, was a controversial statement: "Members are expected to attend meetings." That provision was particularly hard on part-time teachers, who are not required, or paid, by the district to show up for anything but classes. On the other hand, most of us felt that the part-timers, who are generally outside the politics and gossip, who some crowded years have no regular offices, whose mail service is erratic, would benefit most from attending the meetings. And the system has worked, probably less because the procedures stipulate it than because the five or six people care enough to come. They teach one or two sections for roughly half the money they would receive under contract, they get no fringe benefits—sick leave, medical insurance, tuition waivers—and they gallantly show up for a Monday class after they've been notified on Friday that another "reserve" section has "made."

It can't be the promise of voting that lures them, because, although they are counted as part of the necessary majority on most issues, the procedures disenfranchise them when the department is amending the procedures or holding an election. Most important of the elections is for the Department Head, who serves a two-year term and may succeed him/herself once. Department members may nominate themselves or get a friend (let a friend) do it for them. Then the choice is narrowed by successive balloting until one candidate gets a majority of those voting—in the last two elections a majority of one. This system is more or less in keeping with a policy enacted by the district a year or so ago, whereby elections for chairpersons must be held every four years and two names submitted to the administration. We've been holding elections for five years and submitting a single name. So far our choice has been ratified. Whether it's because the administration has not wanted to tangle with us, or because our choices have been uniformly good, is not, at the moment, clear.

The procedures do make clear, however, what the department expects, or allows, its head to do. Aside from his/her obligation to "fulfill those duties prescribed by district and college policy," the head can call and chair department meetings, appoint people to committees, assign summer classes (but only as prescribed by departmental decisions), and carry out departmental decisions. In carrying out those decisions, he/she is reminded that "The Head will consult the department whenever possible on every issue of any importance. He is in no sense a formulator of policy; only the Members acting in concert have that power." And that's why we meet so often. The head can be recalled, too, by a simple majority vote, but the three people who have served the department so far have all been popular, efficient, hardworking, imaginative, and democratic.

Evaluation

One of the most important committees, signified by the fact that its members are elected rather than appointed, is the Hiring and Retention Committee. Three of its six members are chosen each year for a two-year term, and it is given the sole responsibility for screening, interviewing, and voting on every candidate, full and part-time, for any position in the department. The head of the English Department, and the chairperson of the Humanities Division, of which the English Department is a part, are ex officio members of the committee, but they are not allowed to vote, and they are bound by the decisions the committee makes. Membership on that committee used to be a time-consuming job, but now that the college has stopped growing by leaps and bounds, and the English job situation across the country has made moving about pretty unattractive, if not impossible, springtime has become more relaxed. Even though we have anticipated no vacancies for the last two years, however, we've always had at least one. Somebody gets unexpected leave or somebody has to move out of the area.

Just as important as the committee's hiring function is the possibility that it may get involved in firing, too. Although we may see ourselves as all superb, there's the chance that the public may not share that elevated opinion, and the chance that some of us may go from good to worse instead of good to better. There's also, in a shrinking job market, a perfectly normal degree of paranoia: who can be sure that a vehemently expressed opinion won't lead somebody in power to decide that that teacher doesn't "fit"? The carefully worked out rules governing retention, non-promotion, and denial of a five-year contract (the closest thing to tenure that exists in the district) provide both procedures and reassurance. This sampling of rules should be enough to give the idea:

> When in the judgment of the Department Head, sufficient questions have been raised about an Instructor's teaching competence, he will bring the matter to the attention of the HRC. "Teaching competence" is defined to include: (1) Classroom performance. (2) Total conduct as a professional at work.
>
> In arriving at a judgment of classroom performance the committee will consider student opinion (especially, student evaluations, if they are made), and evaluations by Department and Division Chairman.
>
> In composition courses, the main test of a teacher's effectiveness is whether his

students will improve their writing. . . . It is understood that there must be as many ways of teaching writing and language as there are personalities in our department and that the methods used to achieve the objectives will vary. . . . The Department Head will visit three or more of the Instructor's classes. . . . 2. Should the committee decide to check further, it will follow these procedures:

a. A member or members of the committee can arrange to visit the Instructor's classes at such time and in such a manner as not to disrupt instruction. . . .

c. The instructor involved may write a report or discuss the situation with the committee.

d. The committee will then take one of three steps:

1. Stop the check.
2. Recommend dismissal, denial of a five-year contract or non-promotion.
3. Or the committee may offer assistance in one of the two following ways:

a. Formal Assistance:

1. A written statement specifying the area where improvement is needed, the kind of assistance offered, and the dates involved, shall be signed by the teacher, the chairman of HRC, the Division Chairman and the Department Head, and the Dean of Instruction.

2. Two members of the English Department will work with the teacher. One of these assisting teachers is to be selected by the teacher receiving the assistance, and one elected by HRC, and acceptable to the teacher. . . .

3. The assistance will involve:

a) a minimum of five classroom visitations, including one by the Department Head;

b) informal discussion and review of the classes with the teacher receiving assistance;

c) informal discussion of attitudes and approaches. . . .

b. The teacher involved will offer his own plan with the Committee's approval.

3. By no later than the third week in August (more than a year before formal warning of non-renewal would be given under AAUP Guidelines) the assisting teachers and the Department shall make their recommendations to HRC. . . . The recommendation may be that:

a. no further assistance is needed; or

b. assistance should be continued into the fall quarter; or

c. the teacher should be warned that another contract probably will not be recommended.

4. The recommendation of the Committee is binding upon the Department Head. . . .

7. The teacher has a right to counsel at any point in these proceedings, if he feels his interests would be best served.

Although the committee votes every year on promotions in rank and salary increment, the elaborate safeguards here provided have so far not been needed. They were partially invoked only once, and it was from the misery of that experience that the details were made as precise as they are now.

At the time these procedures were written, student evaluation of instruction was a hit and miss affair. Some people asked for student suggestions during final exam period; some people used a standard form; some people just kept on teaching and hoped for the best. Within the last year, however, the district made student evaluation mandatory, and because there had been complaints that the uniform set of questions used experimentally two years ago was too general to fit the special aims of individual courses, the new rules required each department to develop a form that seemed both suitable and equitable. It wasn't easy.

Teacher Evaluation

For several years FPCC English teachers have asked students to evaluate their courses, but evaluation was an individual matter until the Junior College District developed a policy that make student evaluation of courses compulsory. This year departments at FPCC were asked to create evaluation forms for students to use.

In the English department, a committee composed of course chairpeople and individuals selected to represent different points of view within the department worked most of fall semester 1973 to develop evaluation forms for compositions and literature courses.

In creating evaluation forms, we learned some valuable things about ourselves and our department. We had thought we were in agreement about our objectives for English 101 until we began designing questions to see whether we were meeting those objectives. In working out questions, we learned that we had some major differences of emphasis; and we were given an impetus to reconsider each objective quite carefully when we realized we would be evaluated on whether we were meeting departmental objectives in our classes.

We had no written objectives for literature courses, and we learned that we were not in the unspoken agreement we thought we were about what we hoped to accomplish in those courses. So one of the major values of developing instruments for evaluation of English courses turned out to be our own reconsideration as a department of what our objectives should be for each course.

We also learned that it is easy to say that we can separate objectives and methods of reaching those objectives, but it is not so easy to separate them in practice. So now we must try to work out basic minimum objectives for courses that still allow teachers to include their own objectives and those of their students, and to use the methods that work best for them.

If the process of developing questionnaires was helpful to us, so was the opportunity to include questions dealing with racial, religious, and sexual bias in the classroom. We can use information gathered on student evaluation forms in college committees such as the Committee on Sexual Equality, and we intend to encourage our friends in other departments to include such questions on their student evaluation forms to gain still more information.

Student reaction to the questionnaires we developed for fall semester was favorable. The committee had tested questions on students in their classes as we developed the evaluation forms and had asked student advice on types of questions to include. Students said they appreciated especially the open-ended essay questions with which we began each questionnaire. We included space for comments on the evaluation form itself, as well as on the course and the teacher's performance. The comments on the form will guide us in our revision of the forms for spring semester.

All English Department faculty members favored student evaluation itself, but some faculty members were initially concerned about possible misuse by administrators of student evaluations, and about loss of freedom for teachers to use methods that worked well for them. We were aware of the possible danger of teaching to a form. But after the department as a committee of the whole revised the questions suggested by the smaller committee and worked out procedures for administering and summarizing results of the student evaluations, those initial concerns were overcome and faculty members were reasonably satisfied with the forms we had created. We will revise the questionnaires for spring semester and perhaps revise them each semester, but we now see some advantages of departmental evaluation by students. We also see more work we need to do as a department on reconsideration of course objectives.

Sally Souder
FPCC English teacher

Sally doesn't mention the eight hours the department spent going over the form question by question, nor the more than triple that time the committee

spent on the task. If we weren't satisfied, we were at least tired. And when we tabulated the results, we found that two of the questions had confused the students enough that their answers were unreliable. Because the district rules prohibited teachers from seeing the actual forms until after grades were given, and because some students wanted to discuss the results before the class broke up, the English Department paired off in teams to summarize the results. The original intention was that the evaluations would serve a double purpose: helping teachers overcome what students saw as shortcomings, and helping administrators (or departmental committees) make retention decisions if the staff had to be cut. Maybe we asked the wrong questions. By and large, however, what most of us got were love letters. We were touched and flattered by the results—but not much helped in seeing where we go wrong.

Racism and Bias Committee

Equally important, and perhaps more influential in terms of how students see the department, is the committee on Racism and Bias. Charged with examining every prospective textbook for implicit as well as overt racism, the committee reviews the books that have been pedagogically approved by course committees and makes a specific detailed report on any book it finds biased. The committee operates under the following guidelines:

> All textbooks which include professional writing by a number of authors, whether the books are readers or anthologies, must be truly integrated. This means that:
> a. Blacks must be represented in sufficient, not token numbers and
> b. Black writing must not be relegated only to a segregated section of the book.
> In addition, we recommend that Black materials other than textbook selections be included in those courses which use other materials. For example, a 102 section emphasizing film should include films with Black actors and Black films. A journalism class which reads newspapers should read papers like the St. Louis *Argus* and the Black Panther newspaper as well as white papers. (12-9-71)
> Sexism is a concern of the R&B Committee, not necessarily treated in exactly the same terms as apply to racism.

As a result of the committee's recommendations, one major text, used by almost everyone in the department, was dropped because it gave insufficient space to black language and black writers, and a supplementary text was outlawed for open sexism. As an additional result, some members of the department fill out those comment cards that come with examination copies by scrawling such phrases as "Where are the Blacks?" or "What happened to the Indians?" Nevertheless, we have a long way to go, and some of us think that what began well has become mostly a paper commitment.

A Personal Response

Within the last few years institutions of higher education have had to experience the passing of a wave of resolutions promising that they would admit that the society as it is constituted is a multi-ethnic one. That this promise was acquired by violence or some form of insistence by activist students on various college campuses leaves many negative imprints. Regardless of all the protest by those in charge, minority

studies programs made their way into the scheme of things. Along with these programs came the hiring of minority individuals as faculty members and the admission standards underwent some radical changes.

In spite of all these changes the colleges fell short in achieving the crucial element of implementation. I see one component of this variable as being constant evaluation. We need to ask these important questions: Does this work? What made it work? How do we know it worked? We must concern ourselves with the task of evaluation if we are serious about the true inclusion of minorities throughout the English curriculum.

The resolution concerning the inclusion of minority cultures in reading and teaching materials which was passed by the Task Force on Racism and Bias of the National Council of Teachers of English in November, 1970, is an excellent piece of legislation. The establishment of a Racism and Bias committee in the English Department at Forest Park is a good idea, but the execution of the Racism and Bias Committee's recommendation depends on the department as a whole. Establishing a committee is only one step in implementing the legislation. It does not address itself to what is to take place after the reading and teaching materials have been included. If this question were to be answered, we would find that we have not carried out our responsibility. The question that we must ask again and again is: has the passing of that resolution really changed what is actually taught in the classroom? The reason that question cannot be answered at Forest Park is that we have not followed upon the legislation. People have voted not to use textbooks that are racially biased because they want to make a gesture of goodwill—perhaps because they are afraid to vote against it—but we have not made sure that anything positive actually happens in the classroom. Things go on much like always.

There are some valid reasons that real change doesn't take place. Many white teachers simply don't have enough information about black language patterns to teach them adequately; this feeling of inadequacy causes them to shy away from teaching the subject matter in class. We need workshops, budgeted money to bring in resource persons, bibliographies, and some system of allowing black teachers who have expertise to share it without overburdening their schedules.

No progress is being made unless we do give individuals an understanding of the world in which they exist, not just the white part of it, and that understanding should be the core of the educational process. If Forest Park fails to provide this whole view for all its students, it should not enjoy the reputation of being a first rate community college. Courses, for example, which deal with material concerning blacks (black literature, black humanities, and black history, for instance) still suffer from a lack of enrollment by those who are non-black. In Modern Black Writers, a course offered by the English Department, there are seldom more than one or two white students. The white students who do enroll for these courses, which must operate as discussion groups if they are to be effective, are often intimidated or affronted by statements made by hostile black students; the white students feel out of place and sometimes drop the course. The black teacher has a dual task, reassuring the white students that their experiences are valid, too, and that they have something to contribute, and at the same time allowing the black students to feel comfortable enough to discuss their *real* points of view. Both groups of students must keep their confidence in the teacher, because once they become suspicious, real education disappears. And white students might accept the need for understanding black culture more readily if we gave more emphasis to all minority cultures: Chicano, American Indian, Asian-American. But almost none of us have training in these areas, and even less material is available. Issues such as these must be addressed, however, if our attempt to back up the resolutions we pass with actual performance is going to be more than tokenism.

Although Forest Park's English Department has made some progress, it has some raw issues to which meaningful consideration must be given. If the Racism and Bias Committee is to really work, it must be furnished with a structure which will enable the members of that committee to carry out the decisions made by them. Three years

have passed, and the pace at which we have moved has been tortoise-like toward the core of education.

Hattie R. Jackson
FPCC English Teacher

Head of the Department

In a department which makes so many group decisions, it might seem that the head is merely a figurehead, but actually the head earns the nine hours of released time that goes with the position. (A full load for a composition teacher is 12 hours, or four courses; by departmental decision, a composition teacher is anyone who teaches two writing sections--and we all do that.) The head works out the budget, prepares the schedule, counsels students, keeps the peace, correlates FPCC's program with that of the other two colleges, explains and re-explains the departmental philosophy to the rest of the college, and fights for our position when the going gets rough. *He* (the pronoun is currently accurate, even though the term "head" represents a deliberate avoidance of sexual preference) also visits classes, once a year by district requirement, but several times in actual practice, since one formal visit tends to be intimidating and gives only a limited picture of what actually goes on. Besides these duties, which result in a lot of ten-hour days, the head remains a member of the department, with an equal right to produce new ideas.

The Friday evening in-service meetings, held regularly since fall, 1972, were the head's idea, and they've done more, perhaps, than anything else to circulate lively teaching methods, unify department philosophy, and create respect for what our colleagues do. We don't invite outside talent, although we're not opposed to it; instead, one teacher, sometimes two, make detailed presentations of things that have worked for them. We've seen a video tape of a poetry class in session. We've been taught how to teach nursing notes and vocabulary, with the assignments before us. We've watched a set of slides contrasting ghetto stores with the opulent suburbs, and another set that showed advertisements appealing to our unacknowledged values. We've heard a study of dialect variations among our own students, and we've watched the slide presentations a literature class made. We've observed a teacher using a commercial film to teach some techniques of writing. We have, in short, taught each other.

Spare Time

Certainly the energies of department members are not confined to the department itself. We've pushed for, and participated in, a couple of interdivisional research projects, one testing whether a grading system of credit/no entry was more, or less, satisfactory than the conventional system, and another measuring whether texts rated "easy reading" but covering the same concepts as those rated "hard" helped poor readers without antagonizing more sophisticated students. Some of us worked hard at draft counseling until the war finally wore itself out, and the Supreme Court's decision on abortion has made that kind of volunteer counseling less necessary. At least one member donates time for regular book

reviews to community groups. And those of us whose sex is suitable have been active in the college Committee for Sexual Equality. In fact, two English teachers have been instrumental in accomplishing what we were told couldn't be done without a lot of money and a lot of special equipment: creating a drop-in day care center for those pre-school children who used to sit on the floors outside the classrooms, waiting for mama (or daddy or sister or uncle) to come out of class.

Drop-In Center

We are a city commuter college which must meet the needs of students who cannot find or cannot afford to pay high costs for the care of their pre-schoolers. It is not unusual to see youngsters passing time unattended in the library, cafeteria, student lounges, hallways, or attending classes with their parents. We also see a potential student population that would enroll if inexpensive child care facilities were provided. Though Forest Park offers a full child care curriculum, it has been sending its students to other local agencies for their internships, as a permanent child care center has not received budget approval.

We needed a pre-school center, and two women in the English Department who are members of the college Committee on Sexual Equality tackled the job of coordinating Forest Park Student Council, child care faculty, college administration, and other interested individuals in an effort to provide a temporary facility called "Drop-In." From November, 1973, to January, 1974, arrangements were made to secure a large room in the student center, student activity funds for a professional director teacher, and donations of cash, equipment, and supplies to operate the center for the spring semester. A director teacher was hired; schedules were made for staff and student volunteer workers for the center; arrangements were made for registering the children; and an advisory board of staff, students, and parents was formed. Arrangements for insurance, health forms, payment coupons, and snacks were completed.

With all this busywork done, we were able to discuss and plan the philosophy and goals of the center—to provide creative and educational activity for the children. We wanted to encourage them to get along with children of other races and ethnic backgrounds, to allow free play and individual growth activities, to introduce new artistic media, and to provide healthy activities for physical growth.

The center opened on January 28, 1974, for the hours of 8 a.m. to 12 noon, at a cost of 25¢ an hour for each child. There is one adult for every six children present all the time; the supplies keep rolling in from our generous friends; we've been offered the services and resources of the theater, art, nursing, dental, English, and physical education departments for varied children's activities; and we look forward to expanding the hours by fall semester.

This experience has put these two English teachers in close working contact with instructors from other parts of the school, and with student organizations, and has enabled them to learn intimately about budget and plant operations. We found that before approaching the administration on such a project, the committees composed of faculty members from various departments, students, and other volunteers, need to be sure of their common purpose and have agreed on how to achieve that purpose. For practical purposes, one or two persons from the committee should be responsible for taking calls of inquiry and collecting materials. We got a lot of practical experience in how to, and how not to, get things done.

This is not a finished project. We have committed ourselves to working for a permanent eight in the morning to ten at night care center, certified by the state and funded in the regular District budget. But for now, we're proud that we got started.

Lynne Siegel
FPCC English teacher

That's part of community college English teaching, too—being part of the community. With less interference in private lives, perhaps, and certainly with less judgment of private moral standards, we still must involve ourselves more with the problems that keep people from coming to college, or force them to drop out once they have begun. We use the English Department Scholarship Fund, supported by faculty donations and the proceeds of a three-day book sale, to provide emergency funds. It buys an unanticipated textbook here and there; it pays tuition that the regular financial aid service can't cover; it has bought some cafeteria meals for hungry students and, occasionally, paid bail. Mostly the loans are returned.

We recognize that we are in danger of sounding smugly pleased with ourselves. We know our proselety zing can get shrill and a bit tiresome. We are aware that we have a long way to go; we're even aware of the possibility, remote, we think, but there, that we may be going in the wrong direction. But we keep on talking about our philosophy and our program because we're convinced that it's right for us and right for our students.

We didn't ask students to write about what we do: the ones that like us are too adulatory, and the ones that don't, won't. We did ask the Humanities Division secretary what it was like working for us, however, and we didn't threaten to fire her if she said unkind things.

Working with the English Department

After a six months stint in the Registrar's office at Forest Park Community College, working with student records, I decided that somewhere along the way during that six months I had learned to adopt, as my own, the philosophy of the open door community college, but that I wanted to work in an office that was a little more akin to the kind of secretarial work I had done before. So at the first opportunity I applied for a transfer and ended up working as the secretary to the Director of the Allied Medical Development Project. Since the project was funded by a Kellogg grant, it did have a completion date, and when that day arrived I found myself without a boss, without a job, but still an employee of the St. Louis Junior College District and valued enough that the Dean of Instruction gave me some attention—at least long enough to see that I got established somewhere else on campus. There was a little misunderstanding, probably on my part, but being human I like to think otherwise. It was my understanding that I was being "placed" in the Humanities Division to help out for a three week stay and we would talk about my working elsewhere when that assignment was over. At the end of the three weeks I learned in talking with the Humanities Division Chairman that he had the idea that I was here permanently. Therefore I felt a bit like a "budget transfer," or something about as impersonal as a set of numbers. And, needless to say, I had a bit of resentment for awhile.

About six weeks later I was offered a job by one of the top echelon administrators which would have been a considerable salary increment—but I found myself reluctant to give him a positive reply. I wanted to think about it.

Then the evaluation process began for me, at least on a conscious level. What were my considerations? To what could I attribute my reluctance? I'd always thought of myself as being a better than competent secretary and here was a chance for advancement and, after all, I had been just "placed" here. So I called the administrator and told him I'd leave the decision up to him, that I had more or less decided my reluctance was that I'd rather stay closer to the student population, etc. He replied that he had sensed my reluctance and that perhaps I should not give the students all the credit.

More thought and self-analysis, etc. Why did I feel so drawn to these people? And deny it I might, but believe it, I couldn't any longer—I was a part of the division already and hadn't realized when or how it happened.

Since the English Department members were the closest to me in physical proximity, I was naturally exposed to them as individuals more than to my other departments. But somehow it was more than physical exposure. So I began to think of them as individuals and to make evaluations on that premise.

I soon learned why I had become so loyal to my friends in the English Department. They cared about *me*. Why was that so important to an old pro-secretary in her mid-thirties with a family to love and care for? Why? Because we all need to feel "cared" about, and that what we are doing is contributing to the overall scheme of things, right? For the first time I realized "I am" and they had made me realize that, simply by extending warmth and understanding. I remember thinking, "I guess I do have something to contribute after all—if so many educated (reverse snobbery here) and talented people bother to care about me."

It soon became apparent to me that this is the ingredient that keeps many students coming back semester after semester until they have literally exhausted all of the Humanities offerings; these people really care about their students too. They are not really awesome, rather unapproachable Professors of English, but warm human beings that contribute hours of their time beyond class schedules and required office hours to spend time with the individual student. They really care if the individual student learns to write to the best of his ability. That, I discovered, was the real clincher: "to the best of his ability." Some of us only live up to our potential when it is expected by others and pointed out to us.

I think that's what "my" English Department does—they point out the student's potential and expect them to somehow realize it. They're not too concerned with standardized grading systems, or even a pass/fail system, but they are concerned that the individual student decide for himself what his goals are for the class and if he, as the student, feels he has accomplished those goals. That in itself requires a talent that does not come neatly tied in a bow with the master's degree—that takes caring.

Did all of FPCC's English teachers come already equipped with that special knowledge? Maybe. Did FPCC somehow indoctrinate them? Maybe—we have some talented students here, too. Does FPCC have Utopia in the English Department? No, I don't think so, but we're still trying. Do we ever have problems? Lots of 'em. But somehow, as in all families—we seem to work them out and go right on from there.

Pearl Brown
Humanities Division Secretary

We agree that FPCC is a good place to be, perhaps because we agree with the student who wrote in his journal this year: "I've found out in this class that college isn't just for bright people, like I used to think. It's for people who want to learn."

English at Hinds Junior College

The College: Rural roots, 1917. Bounded by a cotton patch, a state highway, a penal farm, a church camp. Dormitories and commuter parking lots. Vocational, technical, academic curriculums. A 540-acre campus with golf course, airport, and cattle farm.

The English Curriculum: Systems approach, accountability, career education, non-print media. Roll call, lectures, tests. Open classrooms, individualized instruction, independent study. Thirteen approaches in Freshman Composition, multi-interest programs in sophomore literature. *Beowulf*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Devils and Demons*, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, William the Conqueror's "Speech to His Troops before the Battle of Hastings," and *Esquire*. Encounter experiences at the penal farm, a medieval meal, commercially published student writing, student inventions accompanied by drawings and written reports. Varied, evolving, flexible.

The Future: Community interest microcourses, a humanities journal, a career education curriculum. Optimum working conditions. Continuous flexibility.

The English Faculty: Twenty-five strong. Farmers, Sunday School teachers, textbook writers, chefs, parents, entertainers, scholars. Renewing passports, changing diapers, empathizing through student journals, creating slide/tape programs. Pants suits and parasols, sneakers and Botany 500. Versatility, camaraderie, enthusiasm—and an occasional mint julep.

These members of the Department collaborated to write this article:

George Abraham
Sandra Boyd
Peggy Brent
Juanita Canterbury
Jerry Carr
Betty Furstenberger
Anne Hardy
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Elaine Hughes
Sara Jenkins
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Jeannie Muse
Nell Anding Pickett
Nell Ann Pickett
Retta Porter
Joy Reid
Ray Shepherd
Edgar Thompson
Polly Tillman
Donna Vinson

Joan Willis

The College

Hinds Junior College is located in Raymond, Mississippi, a small town with a population of almost two thousand, situated near the Jackson metropolitan area. Like all other public junior colleges in Mississippi, Hinds was formerly an agricultural high school, established in 1917. The expansion of Hinds Agricultural High School and other such schools in Mississippi was the result of a 1928 Legislative Act which divided the state into sixteen districts for the purpose of locating a junior college in each. Because of this early systematic planning, the establishment of future public junior colleges in Mississippi is improbable; however, branches or extensions of existing junior colleges have been established to accommodate growing community needs. Hinds Junior College presently operates a branch in Jackson, Mississippi, the capital of the state, and construction on a branch in Vicksburg is underway.

The enrollment of Hinds Junior College has increased steadily since its beginning. The enrollment during the 1974 spring semester, including day and evening academic, technical, and vocational students is approximately five thousand. The open admissions policy of the school has been a chief factor in its consistent expansion. Students may enter Hinds' academic or technical programs under one of three conditions: (1) a diploma from an approved high school, (2) a minimum of fifteen high school units and a satisfactory score on the American College Test, or (3) satisfactory grades on the General Educational Development Test. Vocational students must satisfy only one requirement to enter Hinds: they must be of employable age upon completion of the vocational program. Besides its open admissions policy, some of the credit for a continuously expanding enrollment is due to reasonable tuition. All full-time day students at Hinds pay $100 per semester; part-time students pay on a pro-rated basis per semester hour.

Hinds Junior College, unlike many community or junior colleges, is not solely a commuter school. Eight residence halls house over a thousand students from the four-county supportive district (Hinds, Warren, Rankin, Claiborne), other states, and some foreign countries.

Administratively, Hinds is governed by a Board of Trustees which consists of twelve members from the four-county district. The official representative of the Board is the president of the college. Following the president, the administrative hierarchy consists of deans, division chairmen, department chairmen, and instructors (who hold no rank).

Instructionally, Hinds Junior College has over seventy departments. The largest is the English Department with twenty-five instructors—nineteen full-time and six part-time.

The English Faculty

There are three men and twenty-two women on the English faculty at Hinds, with a median age of thirty-seven, and among them are former high school teachers, a salesman, a secretary, a tennis coach, an editor, and a planimeter operator; motorcyclists, mechanics, gourmet cooks, camera buffs, folklorists, musicians, carpenters, artists, genealogists, farmers, archeologists, printers, col-

lectors, travelers, paper hangers, and an alcohol consultant.

The department maintains active membership and officers in such professional organizations as the Hinds Junior College Education Association, Mississippi Education Association (one member is the immediate past president and one member currently is on the Board of Directors), Mississippi Association of English Teachers, CEA, CCCC, NCTE, Southern Literary Festival, SCMLA, SAMLA, and MLA.

Participation in programs and hosting institutes and workshops have become routine departmental responsibilities. For the past three years the department has planned and hosted a workshop for Mississippi junior and senior college English teachers. In 1974 the English department hosted the Southeastern Conference on English in the Two-Year College with the program chairman and the local arrangements chairman from the department. In addition, every department member served on a local planning committee for the conference. Department members regularly participate in local, state, regional, and national conventions, frequently serving on programs. A generous departmental travel budget assists in these areas.

Members of the department have also served as consultants in workshops on the systems approach and technical writing. In 1970 several faculty members served as coordinator and consultants for a five-week English institute held on the Hinds campus, an institute offering Mississippi junior college English teachers opportunities for professional growth through intensive study of curriculum design in Basic English. A similar institute on curriculum design in Freshman English was held in 1972 and again participants developed programs of study tailored to the needs of their students.

The English faculty not only teach writing, they write. In developing and implementing the English program, the faculty discovered that appropriate textbooks and commercially prepared media materials were not readily available. Unable to find a text suitable for technical students with a broad range of abilities, interests, and needs, two instructors published in 1970 *Writing and Reading in Technical English*. By emphasizing practical application rather than theory, rules, or rhetoric, the authors have developed a functional approach to the teaching of technical writing. Another instructor has devised materials for the developmental student—materials designed on the Hinds campus, classroom tested and revised for five years before being published as a textbook, *Alpha*, in spring 1974. Other textbooks by departmental members are *Handbook for Student Writing* (1972) and *Writing for Occupational Education* (1974). Additional departmental publications include book reviews, scripts for educational television productions, and articles in professional magazines and journals. For the past two years a department member has edited the SCETC Newsletter, assisted by all other members. Forthcoming fall publications include pamphlets on the thematic approach to British Literature and pamphlets on oral and written communication for career-oriented students. Ten of these pamphlets will also be published as a book, *Practical Communication*.

Such diverse abilities and interests of these energetic individuals combine to produce a flexible and innovative department.

The English Curriculum

In 1968, after extensive research, professional consultation, and meticulous planning, Hinds Junior College instituted on a college-wide basis the systems approach to instruction.

A systems approach, although applied somewhat differently within various educational institutions, nevertheless includes some basic precepts: (1) that pretesting be administered to students at the beginning of a course to determine their level of achievement; (2) that written instructional objectives be given to students at the beginning of each assigned unit of study; (3) that these objectives offer the students several learning activities for purposes of mastery; (4) that testing or evaluation include only that material specified in the objectives; (5) that the entire instructional design be modular to expedite revision and evaluation; (6) that the student assume an active rather than a passive role in the learning process; and (7) that the teacher assume the role of manager of learning experiences rather than the traditional dispenser of information. Because of the open admissions policy at Hinds and the subsequent wide range of student ability and achievement levels, it was believed that the systems approach to instruction would be an effective means to reach the greatest number of students. In converting to the system, however, haste was judiciously avoided; a time span of four years was allotted to complete four important phases of the instructional program: phase one, the writing of the instructional objectives; phase two, the planning of the learning activities; phase three, the composing of test items or evaluative criteria for the objectives; and phase four, the refinement of the instructional program.

An elaborate Learning Resources Center offering multiple services, resources, and facilities assists the implementation of the systems approach. The Center, occupying the entire first floor of the library, is equipped with a dial access system, carrels, a television studio, and two classrooms designed specifically for multimedia instruction. The staff of the Learning Resources Center work conscientiously with faculty to assist them in planning multiple learning activities for their instructional objectives.

To assist instructors in the evaluation of students, a testing center was also established. Such a facility enables students to take unit tests whenever they are prepared.

The English Department, adhering to the philosophy of the systems approach, has led the institution in instructional development. Besides establishing a central departmental file of objectives, tests, transparencies, and handouts for all approaches, members of the English Department have worked closely with the Instructional Development Officer in developing numerous media materials. The systems approach and the English Department have proved quite compatible.

Freshman Composition

Freshman Composition (English 1113-1123) is a two-semester program required in all technical and academic curriculums at Hinds. To meet varying student interests and needs Freshman Composition is offered not as the traditional two-

semester sequence but rather as a program of approaches, or choices, from which the student may select the needed or desired approach. In the first semester ten approaches are offered; in the second semester eight are offered.

Approaches offered only in Freshman Composition I
- Basic Independent Study
- Self-Discovery through Writing
- Thematic Writing
- Writing about Science Fiction and the Occult
- Contemporary Composition

Approaches offered in Freshman Composition I and Freshman Composition II
- Business Writing
- Technical Writing
- Writing about Current Issues
- Honors Composition
- Independent Study

Approaches offered in Freshman Composition II
- Writing about Literature
- Writing about Film and Drama
- Creative Writing

All of these approaches emphasize writing, for the Freshman Composition program at Hinds College is a *writing* program. To insure this emphasis, Freshman Composition has course objectives and units of study that apply to all approaches. Each approach centers its subject matter and organizes its learning activities around these objectives and units.

During the first semester seven units of study are covered: *planning the composition*, *patterns of organization*, *the formal outline*, *the paragraph*, *documentation*, *the word*, and *the sentence*. These units and the accompanying objectives may be taken in any order, redefined in any way, or presented through any subject matter—so long as the units and objectives are covered by the end of the semester. Thus, all students in Freshman Composition I, regardless of the approach, are assured that they will be exposed to the same rhetorical principles and emphases.

The second semester course is similar in organization to the first semester course but some choice is permitted in the units that will be studied. Five possible units are offered: *patterns of organization*, *literary analysis*, *imaginative writing*, *practical communication*, and *the library research paper*. As a minimum requirement each approach must include the unit on the library research paper and any other two units.

As a result of the course objectives and units of study applicable to all approaches, several practical matters are easily handled. A student may choose one approach the first semester and another approach the second semester without fear of being at a disadvantage as compared to the student who takes the same approach both semesters. In addition, the recording and transferring of credit is facilitated. The college catalog carries one general description for the first semester program and one general description for the second semester program. Thus, when a student has completed the courses, the student's permanent record simply shows six semester hours credit in English 1113: Freshman Composition I and English 1123: Freshman Composition II.

Other matters, however, have not been solved so easily; specifically, informing students about the multi-approach program, selecting textbooks, and making last-minute faculty schedule adjustments. But whatever the administrative problems—solved or unsolved—the student at Hinds Junior College may choose an approach in Freshman Composition that meets the particular ability or interest.

Basic Independent Study

The Basic Independent Study Approach to Freshman Composition was developed for the student who comes to college unprepared for college composition. Approximately twenty-five percent of the students who enroll at Hinds Junior College are in this category. Their ACT scores in English are below 14, their Purdue scores in English are below 105, and their high school grades in English are below average. Whatever the cultural background of these students, they have several characteristics in common: they have experienced a high incidence of mediocrity or failure in previous English courses; they have never understood the purpose of "English" as a classroom discipline; they have neither the skills nor the confidence to write clearly and coherently; and they are somewhat less than ecstatic over the prospect of learning to write. Basic Independent Study, developed with positive and sound learning principles and with the student in mind, was designed to meet specific needs of these students and to assist them in the learning process.

The instructors for this approach are chosen because they have expressed a specific interest in the program. Although the course is described as independent study, when students enroll they are scheduled for a specific hour three days a week, and they meet with the class three days a week for approximately four weeks. During this time they are in a class of approximately twenty students, and they remain in the group until satisfactory completion of the first writing assignment. Then students are given the opportunity to continue working at an individual pace and are divided into smaller groups of six to eight students that meet regularly with the instructor. Although definite deadlines for completion of the work units are suggested, the student is not penalized for not meeting the deadlines. The student who can work ahead of the deadlines is encouraged to do so. If, at the end of the semester, a student has not completed the requirements of the course, an IP (In Progress) grade is recorded; the following semester the student continues the course until completion.[1]

The material is divided into four parts: Writing to Describe People and Places, Reading and Writing the Narrative, Writing to Explain, and Grammar and Usage. Each part is divided into units, and each unit begins with a list of objectives and activities. The student usually begins at the lowest level of learning-rote objectives for practice. The student progresses to concept objectives and self-tests and ends

[1]Only students enrolled in independent study sections (Basic Independent Study, Independent Study in Composition, Independent Study in British Literature) may receive an IP grade. Those students who continue the course and complete it before the semester ends (or who complete requirements after the first semester ends) may enroll in another course only at the beginning of a semester.

most units with a performance activity evaluated by the instructor. Most of the performance activities require the student to write paragraphs or a short theme. Each instructor of the course decides individually the conditions for completing the performance objectives. With each writing assignment the student is required to submit a plan sheet or an outline, a revised rough draft, and the finished paper according to a specified manuscript form. If performance is unsatisfactory the student must review and revise until the requirements are met. Theme evaluation forms and progress reports aid student self-evaluation.

In Part I, Writing to Describe People and Places, the student is encouraged to use the senses as a source of information. Emphasis is on vocabulary building and sharpening the powers of observation.

In Part II, Reading and Writing the Narrative, the student is encouraged to rely on personal experiences as a source of information. The student is guided through a carefully planned sequence: learning the elements and structure of a narrative; reading a minimum of four professionally-written narratives and completing a plan sheet analyzing each; and finally, planning and developing a narrative from personal experience.

Part III, Writing to Explain, requires the student to explain personal conclusions, ideas, opinions, and/or beliefs. Sources of information include personal observation, experience, and reading. The explanatory writing is developed with validating information.

Part IV, Grammar and Usage, requires a more detailed explanation. Before beginning Part I, the student takes a diagnostic test to determine specific weaknesses in each of four areas: The English Verb, Agreement of Subject and Verb, The Dependent Clause, and The Coordinate Conjunction. These four areas were not chosen arbitrarily. A careful analysis of many students' papers indicated that eighty percent of the errors in grammar and usage resulted from a lack of understanding of the English verb and of clausal structure. If the student scores less than eighty percent in any area in the diagnostic test, then that student is required to complete assignments in that area. Requirements for the area are met when the student scores eighty percent or higher on each of two proficiency tests. The students work in a laboratory situation where they receive instruction on tapes in conjunction with written explanations and self-tests.

Presently, audio-visual aids (transparencies and slidetapes) are being developed to supplement learning experiences in this approach and consideration is also being given to video-taping the units.

Self-Discovery through Writing

Self-Discovery through Writing is designed for any student, regardless of age or background, who wishes to develop as potential for writing an untapped reservoir—the self. This approach offers the student an opportunity to bring into focus material collected subconsciously, rather than to draw conclusions exclusively from outside sources. Such dormant material becomes a valuable source of information for writing as the student reviews personal experiences, attitudes, and beliefs and tests them as valid subject matter for writing.

Although the emphasis is on writing, the learning activities allow the student to explore personal experiences, observations, and ideas, and to establish values, goals, and needs. The student becomes aware of life as a search for identity and tries to impose meaning and order on individual, complex, fragmented, and somewhat chaotic experiences. The personal quality of self-discovery through writing is a sharing with others, or at least a sharing with the other self. In resolving internal conflicts, and conflicts between self and society, the student expands personal identity and develops self-esteem.

A joy of teaching Self-Discovery through Writing is that possible learning experiences are unlimited. Any activity that prompts students to think about themselves is permissible. Among these learning experiences that have proved successful are several that are especially helpful in developing self-assertion:

A counselor administers a standardized personality inventory. The results are explained to the students individually; the revealed character traits inspire writing assignments.

Students keep a journal. Journal-writing reflects the importance of responding to observation, selecting specific details, and developing a personal style in writing.

Students research their genealogy, giving special note to their ancestral position. An alternative assignment is the tracing of the development of an attitude in a chronological outline.

Students are asked to find a poem, a song, an advertisement, a cartoon, a literary passage, etc., which pertains to the theme of identity. They use this material as a basis for writing. The project underlines the universality of the desire to know the self.

Commercially prepared slide-tape presentations on the human search for identity are used as a springboard for writing assignments.

A reader, in addition to a rhetoric, is used to provide examples of professionally-written personal essays.

Self-Discovery through Writing provides an opportunity for the student to think positively about self and to formulate a self-image.

Thematic Writing

The Thematic Approach to composition provides another way to teach writing, a way to appeal to students who enjoy reading as a stimulus to writing. Reading various selections—articles, essays, stories, and poems—students search for basic "verities and truths" which historically have concerned man. Students interested in environmental, social, political, and economic situations learn, through selected readings, that they are not unique in their concern or their search for universal truths: love, honor, hope, pity, compassion, sacrifice, and courage.

Reading stimulates individual thinking, learning, and writing. Students read such selections as "Eighteen" by Rod McKuen, "The Sound of Silence" by Paul Simon, "Daybreak" by Boris Pasternak, from John Steinbeck's *Once There Was a War*, "Drugs and Vietnam," *Gullivers Travels* by Jonathan Swift, "Two Soldiers" by William Faulkner, *Letters from the Earth* by Mark Twain, and *A Member of the Wedding* by Carson McCullers. Students select essays from such magazines as *Playboy*, *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, *Cosmopolitan*, and

Saturday Review. Each student researches some theme of individual interest and presents the material in a documented paper.

Compositions by students reflect individual reactions, observations, and experiences. Some reflect a reinforcement of what students already believed or thought; some indicate a desire to delve further into a problem or a situation, resulting in additional research, thought, and writing; some reflect surprise, comfort, and hope as students find that their experiences, hopes, and frustrations are the same as those of previous generations.

Writing about Science Fiction and the Occult

Writing about Science Fiction and the Occult is designed for students who are intrigued by currently fashionable "offbeat" subjects, such as modern Satanism, Transcendental Meditation, Psychic Research, or Cybernetics, and who enjoy studying, discussing, and writing about unusual subjects not typically treated in freshman composition.

The Science Fiction and Occult Approach emphasizes definition and survey of various subtopics, rather than literary analysis. This emphasis is executed through dividing the course into two segments, of seven weeks or so each. One segment deals with science fiction, the other segment with the occult. At the beginning of each seven-week segment the class selects subtopics for investigation as a class project or individually for independent study. The subtopics provide writing content for the rhetorical units of the course. Typical general science-fiction topics, from which the student may choose four or five, include: UFO's, Time Travel, Cloning, Parallel Universes, the World of the Future, Space Physics, Teleportion, and Science Fiction History and Prominent Writers; those of the occult segment include: Telepathy, Oracles of the Past, Psychokinesis, History of Psychic Research, Witchcraft, Satanism, Folklore, Mythology, and Demonology. After a general introduction, by media or "roundtable" discussion, students further research the topic chosen for that unit and further restrict the subjects for in-depth class discussion and for "warm-up" for individual writing assignments. Students generally elect a subtopic as a class study, thus encouraging group discussion and group projects: trips to local churches, houses, or towns with unusual histories or "flavor"; research jaunts to the State Archives for information on little-known fascinating men or mansions; compilation of statistics from campus and community polling; interviews with psychologists, physicists, local "witches," or other interesting people; student opinionnaires; and informative media aids—television, movies, and tapes. These group projects provide material for writing assignments.

Reading and media materials are abundant and are used to stimulate class discussion and to document research ideas. For each segment a reader such as *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame*, *The Hugo Winners*, or *Devils and Demons*, containing both "classics" and latest trend-setters, offers an opportunity to discuss not only the area being studied, but the treatment of it by such recognized writers as Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Kurt Vonnegut, Algernon Blackwood, H. P. Lovecraft, and Ray Bradbury. The student may consequently be introduced to

a heretofore unexplored range of writers, or, depending on previous experience, delve deeper into a favorite writer's works. Additional media include: films, commercial and public television, and slide-tape presentations or audio tapes; newspapers; and psychology and parapsychology publications, such as *American Psychologist, The Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research,* or scientific or science-fiction publications, such as *Vortex.*

The Science Fiction/Occult Approach offers rich opportunity for class projects, guest speakers, campus polling, etc., for composition material. Classes may be combined for group bulletin board work, outside trips, group reports, interclass debates, or peer grading of content areas. Interdisciplinary campus cooperation can be strengthened by the use of expert speakers from the religion, philosophy, psychology, physics, or biology departments as lecturers on various aspects pertinent to their fields, like karmic reincarnation, dreams, the Rhine research at Duke University, or the possibility of time travel. For example, interdepartmental ESP laboratory experimentation with the Psychology Department, a visit to the physics lab for laser demonstrations, and a trip to the biology lab for explanations on cloning, provide singular writing material. The community and campus may be involved by the students with questionnaires on ESP beliefs, polling on opinions about supernormal activity, interviews on recent UFO activity, "footwork" research on local legends, reputed "haunted" houses, or curious stories.

Because of its subject matter, the Science Fiction Occult/Approach lends itself well to learning activities and writing assignments. For example, the student may, for content, learning and composition possibilities, create an imaginary universe and people it, research and illustrate the realm of demonology in Milton or Dante, compile an original dictionary of science fiction or occult terms, collect examples of epitaphs in local cemeteries, draft a blueprint of a functional UFO, or learn the processes of elementary magical ceremonies. In writing, an imaginary science fiction scene may be the subject of a descriptive paragraph, or the students may be asked to observe and describe a local haunted house or scene or to describe an unusual setting. Narrative writing may be taught by having the student construct a short narrative science-fiction paragraph based on models in a reader, or by having the student relate impressions in an ESP experiment or in meditation. Various patterns of expository writing are easily taught: for instance, the student might, in a process essay, describe how to conduct a seance, an ESP experiment, or an ancient magical ceremony. Various types of demons and ghosts and types of science fiction, etc., may be used as subjects for classification papers. Documentation may be demonstrated in expository or argumentative investigation of restricted topics of the subject, using periodicals, newspapers, media materials, and interviews.

Contemporary Composition

Most of the approaches in Freshman Composition are designed to meet specific needs and to appeal to specific areas of interest. Not all freshmen, however, have clearly defined needs and interests. Contemporary Composition was created, therefore, in an effort to give students a more general approach to Freshman Composi-

tion. While Contemporary Composition was not originally designed as such, it has developed into something of a composite of the other approaches. For instance, typical subjects include war (thematic), drug abuse (current issue), and identity (self-discovery). Some instructors use a reader; others prefer to rely on newspapers and magazine articles for writing stimuli to supplement the rhetoric/handbook.

Materials for this approach vary. In thematic units, such as war and women's liberation, student panel discussions often serve as stimulus for writing. Some instructors, as an environmental-awareness project in preparation for writing, send students to places like the potters' field, youth court, and the drug abuse center. In a current issue unit, students make visual representations, such as collages, newspapers, mobiles, and filmstrips. In a self-identity unit, students read and discuss various examples of stereotypes; then they make a collage of themselves on the exterior of a box and put objects and/or writing inside to show what they as persons are really like. As another stimulus to writing, students view a surfing film first with rock music in the background and then with classical music to demonstrate possible changes in thesis. Virtually all Contemporary Composition instructors require journals from their students in an attempt to encourage honest, natural writing.

Contemporary Composition is a necessary complement to the more specialized approaches that the Freshman Composition program offers.

Business Writing I and II

Business Writing I and II are designed for one-year secretarial students and for students majoring in business.

Through a study of language skills, the student in Business Writing I becomes acquainted with the procedures, principles, and policies characteristic of the business world. The student first recognizes that one way of mastering the different aspects of communication is through the use of a dictionary: how to find information and how to use the right word at the right time. Then the student studies the sentence as a "thought unit." Further, by applying the traditional principles of grammar to the four areas of communication (listening, reading, writing, speaking), the student strives for language proficiency in studying various types of business writing.

Much of the course is concerned with writing business letters, such as: request, response, claim and adjustment, credit and collection, refusal, and sales. Certain types of "semi-social" letters, the personal relations letters of a business organization, are also studied: letters of congratulation, thank-you notes, condolences, and formal invitations. Because the letter of application may be the most important letter a person will ever write, the student answers an advertisement in a local paper and staples the advertisement to the letter when handed in. Attention is called to employment letters other than the application: permission to use a name as reference, refusal of a job, a follow-up to an interview, and a thank-you for a position obtained.

Forms of business communication other than business letters are studied: the

interoffice memorandum, the informal report, and the documented, formal report. Situations, or "case problems," that often occur in a business office are solved in written form with the student adhering to specific instructions.

Throughout the semester the students also give oral presentations based on articles in current periodicals that are of interest to the business world. On a rating sheet the students appraise each presentation.

Business Writing II stresses the influence of effective communication upon human relations in business and in industry. The basic objectives of business communication (to inquire, to inform, to persuade) are related to those functions and skills that will make attainment of those objectives possible.

The student applies the traditional principles of grammar in formulating inquiries, responses, orders, acknowledgements, and remittances. Also emphasized are personal and business letters that meet the following situations: expressing appreciation, offering congratulations, making and acknowledging reservations, accepting and declining an appointment or a formal invitation, and securing a speaker. Common letter-writing problems are faced in job-application situations: obtaining an interview, "selling" one's self, and correctly organizing a personal data sheet. In addition, the student studies adjustment letters, sales letters, and promotional letters.

The student studies the varied activities of the customer service department: receiving and processing claims, dealing with the general public, following up inactive accounts, and inviting suggestions for improving service to the customer.

Because of the importance of credit in today's world, the fundamentals of credit correspondence and the ways and means of collecting are stressed. Also studied are types of credit, the advantages offered by different credit plans, and the qualifications of the "credit man." The student composes a collection series: a letter designed to keep good will, an appeal to maintain business security, an effort to get customer cooperation and interest, and a final letter to be registered with return receipt requested.

As a term project, the student collects information, organizes, and then presents that information as a long, fully documented paper. The paper is based on work experience, a business firm, and a career that are related to the student. This requires a personal interview with an executive of the business. To find background information the student must become familiar with the college library, listing all business periodicals, organizational handbooks, and indexes as possible sources of information. This required report for credit in the course contains a Letter of Transmittal (to the instructor), Table of Contents, Summary, List of Illustrations (if applicable), Body with proper footnotes, and Bibliography with recognition given to the businessman granting an interview to the student.

Technical Writing I and II

Technical Writing has been included in Hinds Junior College's English curriculum since 1962, when it was a one-semester, sophomore-level course. For several years it was essentially a non-transfer, developmental, two-semester course. Then in 1967 two members of the department began work in earnest to develop

a technical writing program that would provide a practical, freshman-level writing course for students in career education programs and that would provide six semester hours credit in composition for Hinds graduation requirements or for transfer to senior college. In the fall of 1972 with Hinds' multi-approach to freshman composition, Technical Writing I and II became an approach in English 1113-1123, Freshman Composition.

Hinds offers some twenty-five technically oriented curriculums, such as fire science, hotel-motel management, dental assisting, veterinarian's assisting, data processing, and nursing. These curriculums, which lead to an associate in applied science degree, require a minimum of six hours of composition; generally students enrolled in these curriculums select Technical Writing.

Students enrolled in this approach have a marked diversity of age range, interests, and employment. Many are long-time employees with little or no formal training who have returned to college to enroll in a curriculum directly related to their occupation; others are students who are employed in jobs related to their curriculum choice, thereby receiving practical experience in addition to formal training. For example, persons enrolled in the Fire Science curriculum include members of the Jackson, Mississippi, Fire Department; students enrolled in Distribution and Marketing Technology are employed in various businesses in the Jackson Metropolitan Area.

Course content for Technical Writing was determined by a random study of area industries and service facilities (a large percentage of Hinds Junior College students remain in the area) as well as consultation with instructors of vocational and technical subjects. Currently first semester emphasizes why and how to write instructions and process explanations, definitions, descriptions of mechanisms, analyses using classification and partition, and analyses using cause/effect; second semester includes direction and practice in writing summaries, business letters, a library research paper, and reports. Each of these types of writing is presented as a unit of study with specific objectives and specific assignments.

Emphasis in Technical Writing is on practical application of writing skills, with class lecture and theory of composition kept to a minimum; for each writing assignment students fill in a plan sheet that requires stating the purpose for writing and the intended reader and listing specific information which is later organized into theme form. In the theme writing process, students are guided by individual conferences, comments on papers, and media. Then students revise and rewrite each theme until it is satisfactory.

Many factors have influenced the growth and the quality of the technical writing program at Hinds. One factor is that the greatest increase in enrollment in the college has been in technically-oriented curriculums; therefore, the number of sections of Technical Writing has increased each semester. Also, the Jackson area is experiencing an unprecedented industrial boom, giving individuals an incentive to return to school to prepare for more gainful employment. Further, the technical writing program has received encouragement from all levels of the college administration. Other incentives have included participation in a Ford Foundation Program in Technical Education and a government grant for developing classroom materials for technical writing. The major factor, however, has been

the enthusiasm and the dedication of the faculty involved in the development of the program. Instructors have been challenged by the need for a technical writing program, by the students enrolled in the program, by the lack of teaching-learning materials, by the practical emphasis of the program, and by the need to redefine higher education to legitimately include technical education.

Current plans are to refine existing units by correlating reading and writing skills and increasing oral presentation requirements. Also being planned is a new unit on the worker and the humanities, a unit which will be media and fine arts oriented. To keep technical writing a practical program, instructors plan to continue to study writing needs of career education students at Hinds Junior College by visiting area industries and service facilities, by interviewing vocational-technical instructors and advisory craft committee members, by enrolling in vocational-technical courses, and by soliciting suggestions from former students who have attained gainful employment.

Writing about Current Issues I and II

A number of Hinds students major in law enforcement, political science, history, and sociology. These students are interested in in-depth analyses of social problems and historical occurrences. Writing about Current Issues is designed for these and any other students interested in contemporary society.

This approach capitalizes on the constant surface exposure of these students to local, national, and international news. From this initial exposure students are then directed into varieties of in-depth study with continuing encouragement toward placing events in historical perspective. The content or general topics for discussion and writing vary, depending upon newsworthy items. For discussion and writing all students are restricted to a single general topic which parallels one or two rhetorical units. Last semester, for example, Law and Order served as a general topic for the unit on planning the composition, and Government/Politics while studying paragraph development. Use of a general topic increases student interest, for it can be narrowed in nearly any direction of student interest.

Much planning is necessary for correlation of class activities with topics for discussion and writing. The majority of the handouts and exercises use sample thesis sentences or topic sentences on current topics, but not necessarily on the topic being discussed at the time; in-class illustrations are usually drawn from the assigned topic. Writing assignments of both paragraphs and themes are varied among narrative-descriptive, expository, and argumentative types.

Slide tapes, audio tapes, and films on the general topics provide variety in introducing a new topic and stimulating ideas. For example, a slide tape on the human search for law and justice introduces the unit on Law and Order. Following this presentation, students are given factual and opinion questions, some requiring library research. Frequently, the question is the tinder, firing an in-depth writing assignment. Audio-tape discussions on such subjects as wiretapping and gun-control prompt topics for class writing assignments for documented papers.

Writing about Current Issues has no adopted reader; the students use the library and subscribe to *The National Observer*. Also, individual access to the newspaper

encourages more thorough reading and provides all students with a personal sourcebook on current issues.

Documentation, a skill often boring and seemingly useless to Freshmen, is an integral part of the Current Issues Approach. In order to write knowledgeably on a chosen topic, some students must research such basic information as names and dates. Any information which the students did not know before they started working on an assignment must be documented. Thus, the students understand the need for research and documentation and they become proficient at bibliography and footnote forms with much less frustration.

Some informal coordination has been possible between the Current Issues Approach and the courses offered in the Social Science Department (particularly political science, sociology, and police science). Some writing assignments in the Government/Politics unit are taken from political science concepts. Books read for these other classes count as extra credit work in the English class when presented according to instructions. Instructors from the English Department and the Social Science Department have served as resource persons for the Current Issues classes; students are also encouraged to go to other instructors for suggestions on where to locate specialized material or for interviews with instructors who have special knowledge on assigned topics.

Special activities have so far been the highlight of the Current Issues Approach. These have included a presentation by a counselor from the Hinds County Youth Court and speeches by state and local government officials on the operation of Mississippi and Jackson government and on the political spectrum locally. Also, during the spring legislative session, students have enjoyed watching state government in operation at the Capitol, visiting the Jackson Mental Health Center, and, while studying the Mississippi Judicial System, attending a session of Circuit Court. Prior to the 1972 elections, the Current Issues students polled the student body of Hinds on the Presidential and two Congressional races; students have also polled at random on drug use and the sexual revolution. Interviewing such persons as the lieutenant governor, senators and representatives, law enforcement officers, and local politicians and community leaders has permitted dialogue with those working within the political system. After each of these activities, students are given a writing assignment.

Writing about Current Issues continues to elicit student interest and response because it offers an untraditional and effective approach to an ordinarily traditional yet necessary course.

Honors Composition I and II[2]

Believing that academically talented students should be challenged to write as effectively as they think, Hinds organized its first honors approach to the teaching of composition in 1969. Students are screened by test scores (150 and above on the

[2]Beginning in the fall of 1974, Honors Composition I and II will no longer be an approach in English 1113, 1123: Freshman Composition. It will be a separate course, English 1213, 1223: Honors Composition, so that honors work will be duly recognized on the student's transcript.

Purdue Test, 25 and above on the English section of the ACT) and a writing sample during the summer prior to their entering college. Qualifying students are then invited to participate in the Honors Composition program.

The approach is planned with flexible guidelines, encouraging students to assume a measure of the responsibility in setting up objectives. The instructor, of course, must carefully assess the first semester's work to insure that basic patterns and purposes of expository writing are understood before the student attempts critical analyses based upon a variety of literary genres, the main objective for the second semester.

Class meetings are as informal as the old fashioned sewing bees. On talk days students arrange chairs in a circle including one for the instructor. Topics for these talk sessions erupt from the group with very little interruption or even guidance from the instructor: "That man has just gotta go. This country can't stand another day of this." "Of course the UFO's are from other planets." From one student, "The death penalty by hanging to the next tree ought to be reinstated"; countered by another student, "Castration is the answer to rape. Match the punishment to the crime." And whatever assertion is made by anyone in the class is challenged by a "Why?" from other students. So go the talk sessions in Honors Composition at Hinds. From these uninhibited reactions to social, political, ethical, and economic conditions hopefully evolves a maturing logic, as the student must ultimately defend conclusions in organized, precise writing. Out of these sessions grow sensitivity to each other, respect for diverse thought, a developing power to think critically, and subjects for papers.

The number of papers written per semester varies from fifteen to twenty according to the ability norm of the students. All assignments during the first semester are expository themes with major emphases on analytical writing. Second semester assignments are principally literary analyses with creative efforts restricted to the writing of one short story, one poem, and occasionally a dramatic skit.

Success is contingent upon many variables, especially careful screening and emphasizing to the student that being invited into Honors English is an *honor.*

Independent Study I and II

Independent Study I and II is designed for students who prefer to work at their own pace or for students who, for one reason or another, cannot participate in regular classroom activities. Furthermore, this approach is not designed for, or limited to, any particular intellectual level; rather, it is designed for students who must take more or less time on any or all of the units than the traditional classroom schedule permits. Actually, this designation means that almost any student could in fact be enrolled in the independent study approach. It also means that the students may be accelerated from one unit to the next or spend as much time as needed on a unit. Should the students need more than a semester to complete requirements, they receive an IP grade.

Since the students who enroll in independent study participate in few regular classroom activities, the learning activities must compensate for this minimum of classroom exposure. While the activities for this approach are largely traditional,

the methods for completing them are largely non-traditional. There are small group meetings and some regular classroom sessions. The students have regularly scheduled individual conferences. The primary exposure to the material, consequently, comes from media, most of which have been produced by the English faculty. The students also complete the reading assignments and writing exercises, along with other usual learning activities. After these multiple exposures the students complete the units with extended writing assignments.

The limited classroom time does not allow the students to undertake in-class longer writing assignments; therefore these longer writing assignments are handled through the testing center. Students, at their own convenience, report to the testing center and write these more lengthy papers.

Since flexibility has been the key word for the Hinds composition program, independent study instructors allow their methods of guiding the students toward their own knowledge at their own rate to remain flexible. The independent study approach has evolved from an "interesting thought" to a somewhat workable reality in two years. Flexibility allows that evolving to continue.

Writing about Literature

Writing about Literature is a second semester course in freshman composition which involves, as a basis for expository writing, the study of readings from three basic genres—fiction, poetry, and drama. This approach requires the students to read, to think about what they have read, and (in a composition) to analyze their reading. A minimum of eight themes of 300-500 words each is required, in addition to a research paper of 1500-2000 words. The student is forewarned that the course is time-consuming, for not only does it involve reading and writing but research in both the library and the community.

Involvement is the key to the success of the course. The students participate in class projects and group discussions; they are responsible for class projects that benefit the entire class. Classroom discussions are lively as students sort through their ideas, argue over them, and sometimes even agree on them. Because the group discussions often prove to be of more value to the student, many of the instructors' lectures are put on tapes in the Media Center so that the student can check them out for future reference.

Believing the function of literary criticism is to explain or make plain the work, the instructor assigns topics that deal with interpretation and analysis of the author's techniques, such as imagery, style, tone, symbolism, character, theme, and structure. The student, however, is not limited to interpretative and analytical themes but uses the literature as a sparker for topics. This semester, for instance, after reading "Pantaloon in Black" several students chose topics such as a comparison of the use of the mask motifs in several selections and a study of local sawmills, the latter from a young man fascinated by Rider's occupation. James Dickey's *Deliverance* elicited a variety of compositions: from a young ministerial student, the use of Christian symbolism in the novel; from a football player, Dickey's use of Vince Lombardi's philosophy as the theme of the novel; from a music major, an original composition recorded and sung for

the class; from art students, paintings, sketches, and collages.

The students are encouraged to involve the outside community in their class projects. Several students, as an outside project, after reading the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, lived for a week on the amount of welfare allotted to a dependent child; two young black men told of their conversion to the Black Muslims and explained the tenets of their faith. During the unit on war poetry, one student arranged for a psychologist from the Veteran's Hospital to speak to the class on the rehabilitation of war veterans. Because the college is located in an area rich with American history, students visit local sites, taking pictures, making slide/tapes, and conducting interviews to share in class. It has become a familiar sight in the community to see students hiking out into the countryside, perhaps to the Civil War Cemetery, perhaps to the penal farm or potter's field. One elderly gentleman was heard to remark: "That's them college kids learning their lessons." The English faculty would like to believe that this is so.

Writing about Film and Drama

While using the departmental learning units, the instructors who teach Writing about Film and Drama simply gear their learning activities to film and drama as the common experiences on which the students base the more sophisticated writing assigned in Composition II. This approach uses an old, established literary genre—the play—and a newer genre—the motion picture. Both appeal to visually oriented students who have been watching a screen for more hours than they have spent reading or writing.

Students in this approach undertake the play assignments—usually one of the Oedipus cycle, *Othello*, and a contemporary play—by reading the play, participating in classroom discussion, doing some library work, and finally writing a paper, usually a character analysis or a structural analysis. The students, however, find the film assignments are not so traditional because of the nature of the genre. The film library is new; the holdings are somewhat limited to motion pictures that are used by the general faculty: short features that are non-disciplinarian, so to speak (i.e., *Why Man Creates*, several *Psychology Today* releases); short features that illustrate film techniques (i.e., *The American Time Capsule*, *Fire Mountain*); short features that illustrate film-making (i.e., *Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary*). In addition, each semester the instructors rent feature length films, such as *Citizen Kane*, *Oedipus Rex*, *On the Waterfront*, *Casablanca*, *The Wild One*, as well as short features such as *Dream of the Wild Horses*, *The Junkyard*, *The Time Piece*. The rented films are shown in class and the purchased films are shown in the Media Center.

Since the course is not designed to teach film-making or play-making any more than a traditional second semester course is designed to teach poetry or short story writing, the students concentrate on refining the basic composition skills they have learned in Composition I.

Creative Writing

Creative Writing, as part of the Composition II program, has had to evolve

from ideal into reality. Originally conceived and written during a summer institute, the course was designed to provide second-semester freshmen who like to write imaginatively a chance to experiment freely in the standard genres—fiction, poetry, and drama.

But in the fall of 1972, when the course was first taught, very few of the students enrolled were equal to the requirements. Many had severe clarity problems, both in thinking and in writing, preventing their achieving even moderate success with the genre assignments; only a few of them voluntarily read on a regular basis; few had ever written from any impulse; and, worse, many students had simply elected the creative writing approach because they thought it would be a do-your-own-thing-and-forget-freshman-themes.

So the following year a new strategy emerged: why not offer a "creative" course that would provide substantial practice in needed expository skills while still encouraging individual experimentation? Such a course could still emphasize writing as a lifestyle—if not as an art, at least as a profession. In the new strategy, opening classes were devoted to structuring the course. Instructor and students decided on these guidelines:

> Major writing requirements would be four articles (or other pieces of writing) submitted for publication. Each student would be responsible for studying the markets, selecting three markets per article, keeping market sheets up to date, and having material typed into proper manuscript form to meet submission requirements.
>
> To insure a wide variety of writing experiences students would also keep a journal with a minimum of three full pages per week, write a midterm creative paper, a final documented paper, and six to ten in-class topic-assigned or response pieces.
>
> Rather than adopting a class text, copies of *The Writer's Market*, as well as a number of how-to books, would be placed on reserve in the library.
>
> Class time would usually be spent writing and working on rough drafts. Minimum teaching sessions would cover only the essentials—research and documentation, manuscript preparation, topic restriction, sources for ideas, and common mechanical problems.
>
> One class period per week would be held in the library to allow for teacher assistance in gathering data and studying markets.

As the course has progressed flexibility of the required writings has rapidly revealed students' interests and abilities. Some students prove to be enthusiastic writers who can dash off 2,000 polished words; others have to be coaxed into 300 words. Some have exceptional experiences to draw from; others have to depend totally on outside information. Occupational interests, hobbies, artistic abilities, dramatic life experiences surface quickly when students have to search for something worth writing about—something that just might be printed.

Even though writing for publication requires an unusual amount of independent discipline and motivation, most students usually finish with a fairly publishable piece of writing, no matter how many revisions and retypings are needed. The submissions from the current classes range from poetry and fiction manuscripts to how-to articles complete with illustrations, personal experience revelations, researched information pieces, as well as handyman creations and

plans for proposed inventions. Some of the titles indicate the variety: "One Rep for Burning Your Roommate," "The Undercover Umbrella," "Mustaches I Have Known," "From Cradle to Burglary," "Dear, Deer Land of Texas," "A Police Car Named Adam," "Confessions of a Travelling Saleslady," "B. B. King—Mississippi's King of the Blues," "How To Buy a Muzzleloading Rifle," "Single Girls, Beware," "How to Build an A-Frame Duck Blind," "Little Things—Like Rolling in the Grass at Midnight."

Success in publication has been moderate so far, but still noteworthy for freshman composition students. Several letters-to-the-editor (the initial warm-up assignment) have been printed in national magazines; at least three of the first set of articles have been printed in local papers and state magazines; a few of the first set of articles have already been accepted for publication in national small-circulation magazines; and a good many students have been pleased just to receive personal rejection letters from editors. Hopefully, manuscripts currently in the mails will bring a few other "accepted for publication" responses.

The extra assignments have also proved to be productive. Creative mid-terms contained one-act plays, short stories, collections of poems, illustrated compositions, and even a musical transposition. A few in-class writings have served as "sparkers" for longer articles. And the journals have turned out to be delight and discovery, for both student and teacher, as well as a source for article ideas.

So the new course has been "creative," if the over-worked term really means, as stated by the dictionary, "productive . . . characterized by originality and expressiveness." Yet the present plan is still not completely satisfactory because it has yielded no time to study and experiment in the more imaginative forms of literature such as fiction, poetry, drama, and television scripts. Eventually, perhaps, two distinct courses will develop—one for those interested in genre writing and one for those interested in magazine writing. Then the course vaguely termed "creative writing" could be supplanted by more specific courses that would better meet individual needs and abilities.

Sophomore English Program

The present sophomore level English program at Hinds is designed for its transfer students. (In the fall of 1974, however, two sophomore level writing courses for career-oriented students will be added.) The four-year institutions to which these students transfer usually require six semester hours of British Literature. In some curriculums American Literature is acceptable. Understandably, then, at Hinds the primary sophomore literature emphasis is on British Literature.

British Literature

In the last two years, the British Literature program has been broadened to include five different approaches: Survey, Major Writers, Themes, Honors, and Independent Study. The different approaches are publicized and are designated on the class schedules each semester so that the students can choose a desired approach. But since all the approaches have the same general objective, they

carry the same number (English 2233: British Literature I for first semester and English 2243: British Literature II for second semester). Furthermore, to facilitate the recording and transferring of credit the college catalog carries a general description for British Literature I and for British Literature II.

The following discussion of Hinds' five approaches to British Literature treats minimumly those approaches that are standard in design (Survey and Major Writers) and treats at length those that are innovative or individualized (Themes, Honors, and Independent Study).

A. Survey Approach

The Survey Approach until two years ago was *the* British Literature course at Hinds. Though quite traditional, the approach uses varied learning experiences, including instructional multi-media and student-centered projects. Among the projects the students have chosen, and providing enjoyment, was the Chaucer project in which the students planned the pilgrimage, made the costumes, and enacted the characters. The end of the pilgrimage culminated in a medieval feast prepared by the students.

B. Major Writers Approach

Although a long-standing approach at other institutions, the Major Writers Approach to British Literature at Hinds was instituted only a little more than a year ago. In-depth study of the literature is enhanced by interdisciplinary activities chosen by the students. Speech students may select from a variety of types of literature for interpretative readings. Art students may study the art of the age. Music students find the lute and the madrigal interesting. One student, interested in music, made an in-depth study of the music of the Anglo-Saxon period; she constructed a facsimile of a lyre, researched musical manuscripts to trace subsequent influences and, with the cooperation of the music department, made recordings that have become a permanent part of the media holdings. Drama students revel in the masque and excerpts from the man "not of an age, but for all time." Some history, philosophy, religion, and sociology students are shocked to find that even though the times have changed, people have not. Other students relate their special interest to the literature with collages, montages, impressionistic paintings, and sculpture.

C. Themes in British Literature

A thematic approach to British Literature was developed at Hinds to broaden and strengthen the appeal of literature to students. Some instructors were becoming aware through professional journals and conferences that many community colleges throughout the nation were eliminating the six hours of literature requirement in many of their programs of study, and just as important, many senior colleges were waiving the same requirement in many of their curriculums. Such changes in curriculum requirements prompted some instructors to consider the

course appeal of British Literature. How could sophomore literature be made more appealing to students? How could a literature course be structured so that students who are now required to take it would take it as an elective even if it were not required?

The instructors began with British Literature students, since they comprise the vast majority of the students enrolled in literature courses at Hinds. These students were asked what they considered to be the greatest weakness of the present course. Overwhelmingly, they responded that British Literature, as they presently studied it, seemed to bear no relevance to their lives. They enjoyed much of what they read in the course but wanted to study topics that might be more meaningful to them after they left Hinds. In actuality, what these students meant by topics was themes, and the themes that students wanted to study were not "topical" but rather universal: *the hero*, *death*, *love*, and *war*. Several instructors agreed to experiment with a new approach based on these universal themes in British literature, and the work began. The selection of the literature for each theme was obtained from those teachers involved with the approach, some instructors who taught the Major Writers and Survey approaches, and interested students. After the literature was chosen, introductions which explained the treatment of the theme in each selection were written. Finally, the study questions and learning activities for each piece of literature in all four units were composed.

Presently, the course is arranged chronologically; although each theme is studied separately, six periods of British Literature are covered in each theme. First semester includes *the hero* and *death*; second semester, *love* and *war*. *The hero* unit traces the development of eleven hero types in British Literature: the adventurer, the anti-hero, the courtier, the materialist, the military hero, the monarch, the primitive, the rebel, the socialite, the religious hero, and the villain. Close attention is given in this unit to the historical forces which shaped the various heroes. In addition to the usual classics such as *Beowulf*, *Paradise Lost*, and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," the reading list includes William the Conqueror's "Speech to His Troops Before the Battle of Hastings," Thomas Cranmer's "Speech at the Stake," Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder's "The Courtier's Life," Jonson's "To King James," Marvell's "An Horatian Ode," Steele's *The Guardian*, Number 34, Thomson's "The Happy Man," Burns' "John Barleycorn," Wordsworth's *Michael*, Byron's "The Prisoner of Chillon," Keats' "Meg Merrilies," Tennyson's *Becket*, Auden's "The Unknown Citizen," Comfort's "Song for the Heroes," and excerpts from Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Thackeray's *The Four Georges*, Shaw's *Saint Joan*, and Fleming's *Thunderball*.

The *death* unit traces three basic attitudes towards death as depicted in literature: resignation, contempt, and fascination. The reading list begins with "The Wanderer" and concludes with Sylvia Warner's "Four Epitaphs."

In the *love* unit four types of love (spiritual, erotic, fraternal, and familial) are traced through British Literature. The literature selections in this unit are equally as diverse as those in *the hero*.

The *war* unit traces eight types of warfare as depicted in British Literature: tribal, chivalric, nationalistic, civil, colonial, revolutionary, imperialistic, and

technological. The literature in this unit includes early through modern pieces about these various types of warfare.

After finishing two semesters of Themes in British Literature, students have not only a clear perception of the development of these themes but also a firm understanding of the historical and literary forces of six periods of British Literature. Since students are exposed to these distinct periods four times during the course, reinforcement of learning is definitely enhanced.

The learning activities in this approach are generally similar to those in the other literature approaches but, of course, emphasis is primarily on the theme. Thematic teachers have experimented with beginning a unit with the Modern Period. Once the students are exposed to "where they are today" with respect to a *hero*, for example, they enjoy then moving to the Anglo-Saxon Period and on through the Victorian Period, thus understanding "how they got where they are."

Excellent class response and favorable student evaluation indicate that the Themes in British Literature Approach is both workable and desirable.

Honors Approach[3]

The general aim of the Honors Approach is to permit the capable student to pursue the study of British Literature according to personal objectives. These objectives originate primarily from the student's interests, talents, and proposed vocation.

A music major, for example, may choose to correlate the characteristics of music in a given period with parallels in literature. An art major may elect to follow a similar pattern of correlation between art and literature. A recent pre-law student chose to research the influence of law in each literary period. By drawing charts, making tape recordings of the research, and writing numerous essays, the student treated such themes as order and chaos, peace and war, patriotism, nationalism, and liberty. The student showed how these themes in literature were a direct outgrowth of the prevailing laws of the period. Of course, all students in the Honors Approach may not have chosen a specific vocation. Nevertheless, if these students have been selected justifiably, they have interests and talents which can be pursued creatively. For example, a student may not be able to draw with much natural talent; but if sufficiently interested, the student may photograph, sketch illustrations from selected sources, and organize the material as a concrete expression of imagination and research.

The success of the Honors Approach depends largely on the selection of the participating students. The selection process requires a great deal of the instructor's time, plus the full cooperation of colleagues. The specific steps in student selection are these:

A memorandum is sent by the Honors instructor to each Freshman Composition instructor before fall pre-registration. This memorandum explains briefly the aims

[3]Beginning in the fall of 1974, Honors British Literature I and II will no longer be an approach in English 2233, 2243: British Literature I and II. It will be a separate course, English 2613, 2623: Honors British Literature, so that honors work will be duly recognized on the student's transcript.

of the approach and states the distinction between this and other approaches. A list of each instructor's students whose average in Freshman Composition is A or B and who may be interested in this approach is returned to the Honors instructor.

An individual letter is sent by the Honors instructor to each student recommended. The student is requested to check one of these responses:

_____ interested
_____ not interested
_____ may be interested

The student is asked to return the letter to the Honors instructor.

All "interested" and "may be interested" students are requested to attend a meeting in which the Honors Approach is fully described and questions invited from the students. Those who would like to participate in the program are asked to confer individually with the Honors instructor at a designated time.

An individual conference is held. This conference gives the instructor an opportunity to learn the special skills and interests of the student and to answer further questions concerning the approach. The most frequent question is "Will I have to spend more time in this approach than I would in a regular approach?" (Often meaning, of course, "Will I have to do more for an A in this approach than is required for an A in other approaches?") The question is answered honestly—"Perhaps, but if what you are doing appeals to your individual interests and skills, you will be scarcely aware of the additional time and effort."

Satisfactory selection of students and execution of the course depend on several factors. Instructors in other approaches must have genuine professional interest in encouraging students—students who might contribute much to their own classes—to enroll in the Honors Approach. Also, students must really want to participate. Students may have strong capabilities but lack sufficient interest and initiative. Course enrollment is an important consideration. Fifteen seems to be an ideal number. Too many students per section possibly reflects inadequate screening or poor scheduling; too few students tend to make instructor and students less enthusiastic.

The Honors Approach emphasizes extensive reading, with an annotated bibliography as a "must." In an assigned fifteen-minute weekly conference the student discusses the week's reading with the instructor, submits a written progress report on the unit objectives, examines graded papers, revises papers as necessary, and when papers are completely acceptable places them in a folder to become a permanent record of performance in the course. More specifically, the bases for assigning a semester grade are these:

An annotated bibliography. The amount of reading varies according to the student's interest, selected projects, and research evolving from group meetings and conferences.

An hour test in at least two units of work.

Two essays. One of these is documented; the other is of a creative nature.

A minimum of two projects or visuals evaluated on unit coverage and concreteness of idea.

The Honors' Approach differs from the Independent Study Approach (although both are highly individualized and emphasize the study of literature according

to the student's interests and special talent) largely in the nature and amount of reading, greater freedom in setting up individual objectives, and more selective and creative means for reaching these objectives.

Independent Study Approach

The Independent Study Approach to British Literature is designed primarily for those accelerated students who may wish to complete the course requirements before the semester ends and for "slower" students who may wish to take more time than the semester permits without being penalized. Accelerated students may advance from one unit to the next upon satisfactory completion of each unit, thus having several weeks of the semester remaining after finishing the course requirements. Although it is not possible to enroll in another course immediately, these students have additional time to spend on other subjects. The slower students, on the other hand, may require more than one semester to complete the course. If so, they receive an IP grade rather than an F, which would probably be given in other approaches.

The word "independent," by its several connotations, can be near fatal to both instructor and students unless a clear meaning of the word is established. When this approach was first offered, students who were not attending the group meetings and the assigned weekly conference maintained upon questioning that they understood in this approach they might independently choose those meeting and learning activities in which they were interested. Thus evolved this definition: "Independent Study offers students the opportunity to progress at an individual pace and to participate in those learning activities best suited to personal interests and needs in meeting the objectives of British Literature." But an individual pace can be deceptive to the most conscientious of students, particularly when interest in British Literature is somewhat lagging. When does pace truly represent proper budgeting of time? The situation becomes further complicated when the less conscientious students fervently contend that they have always been slow when in reality they are simply dilatory. This problem has been met by making a suggested, non-penalizing schedule that allows for comfortably completing the semester's work. The schedule itself is sufficient for the conscientious; a little prodding has helped to improve the pace of the less conscientious.

Also, the contract system helps students to decide what pace is the right pace. Students select, during the first few weeks of enrollment, the desired contract grades. All units provide levels of achievement; the minimum represented by a C contract must be reached by all students to receive credit. Requirements for B and A contracts differ from the C in amount and quality of work. The student who contracts for a B is given opportunity to revise papers and take additional tests to meet the contract. However, if the grades continue to be C's the student is encouraged by the instructor (more often the student makes the suggestion) to change the contract grade to C. This change frees the student from skill and time demands which apparently were too strenuous.

Further, the phrase "those learning experiences best suited to personal interests and needs" often becomes subjective in treatment by the instructor and baffling

to the student, particularly if the student's interest response is low and if the student's specific needs are indeterminable. Such students evidently are misplaced in an Independent Study Program.

To assure proper selection, the following Independent Study student profile is submitted to prospective students:

The student is a self-starter. The student surveys a period of literature, reacts, and selects learning experiences of special interest.

The student has confidence in personal judgements and conclusions.

The student does not hesitate to ask questions of the group instructor and the panel instructors.

The student is self-disciplined. The student does not procrastinate, but rather works consistently on a self-devised schedule.

The student is well-organized in thinking, studying, and reporting.

The student is pragmatic. If a needed book is not available, a suitable substitute is selected. If the Media Lab material has mechanical flaws, is not interesting, or is insufficient, a profitable substitute is made.

The student is a sharer. By tape recordings, mimeographed sheets (to be distributed to the other students), and group reporting, the student will both *give* to and *receive* from the reports of others.

The student prefers self-motivated study to meeting in class a specified number of times each week where the instructor does most of the speaking with sometime comments from the students.

The student uses to advantage the between-meetings time for both course preparation and schedule shifting to meet emergencies in other courses or elsewhere.

The student understands "independent" to mean selection of representative writings and procedures in keeping with course objectives, not each student proceeding without regard to others' views and interpretations.

Thus far the Independent Study students and instructor have been able to solve major difficulties, keeping in mind that such an approach must remain flexible. What works on one occasion for one student may not work on another occasion, nor for another student. In the regular fifteen-minute weekly conference the student and instructor attempt to evaluate procedure and accomplishments, keeping alert to other possibilities and objectives.

American Literature

An American Literature course would come alive to almost any student given the opportunity to interview Margaret Walker; see a local production of Eudora Welty's "A Season of Dreams" and view a collection of her photographs and manuscripts at the State Department of Archives and History; attend the Phillis Wheatley Festival and hear Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, and other well-known black poets read from their works; visit William Faulkner's home, "Rowan Oak," and take an imaginary trip through Yoknapatawpha Country. All these opportunities, and more, have made Hinds students more aware of the shaping forces of their literary heritage—and the quality of that heritage.

All too often students regard their study of literature as a meaningless accumulation of names, titles, and dates; and rightly so if the study has been isolated from their cultural tradition. To stimulate student interest, Hinds instructors do not adhere to the strict chronological arrangement of the traditional survey course. Certainly the literature must be studied in terms of its historical context, but this type of organization is not the only possible one. For example, American Literature classes have traced the development of black literature from the Civil War to the present and studied chronologically a particular category, such as naturalism. Another arrangement has been the organization of units around recurrent themes in American literature—among them: the search for personal identity, spiritual loneliness, alienation, and the rights of the individual. As a result of a thematic approach, some students have been surprised to learn that many of the issues and concerns of today are not really new.

An interdisciplinary approach has also been very effective. For example, to motivate students to learn more about southern writers, a unit on Civil War poets is correlated with one on the historical background of the period, thus revealing the literature even more clearly as a reflection of the age. In another unit a history teacher visited the class and discussed the historical authenticity of Stark Young's *So Red the Rose* and Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*.

Other methods of enriching classroom instruction have included the use of non-print media, oral interpretations, short dramatic presentations, original research projects, field trips, and panel discussions featuring local authors. Each method has contributed to the process of redefining values and affording new insights. These methods, however, have enhanced, not supplanted, a close, analytical study of the literature.

The course provides a wide variety of learning experiences that maintain a balance between the practical and the innovative, the traditional and the new, the factual and the aesthetic.

Future Plans

Since the Hinds Junior College English Department adapts to changing characteristics of students, societal transitions, student enrollment, and general departmental needs, continual anticipation of these factors is an ever-present concern. To meet the challenges of a changing student population, the English Department has proposed significant additions to the English curriculum. Because larger numbers of students are seeking more practical and relevant instruction to prepare them for careers, the English Department will offer in the fall of 1974 two new sophomore level courses: Occupational Writing and Professional Writing. These courses will provide students with writing practice relevant to their career goals. Occupational Writing intends to assess the students' vocational preferences and to improve their on-the-job writing. Professional Writing purports to aid those students who are interested in writing as a marketable skill by giving them direction in composing television scripts, magazine articles, and imaginative pieces.

In addition, the English Department's growing interest in cross-discipline courses has resulted in the preliminary planning of a humanities course (involving litera-

ture and the fine arts), an American cultural awareness course (combining sociology with American literature), a communications course (joining first semester composition with oral communication), a developmental, or basic, communications course (utilizing skills taught in reading, oral communication, and composition), and a historical issues writing course (involving composition with history). Moreover, black literature, world literature, and a linguistic approach to freshman composition are seriously being considered as additions to the program. As a different kind of offering, the department intends to teach practical microcourses in both the day and evening programs. Examples of these are: Writing Job Applications, Interviewing for Jobs, Writing Governmental Proposals, Use of the Telephone in Business, Researching Career Opportunities, and Using Media in Oral Presentations.

To accommodate the shift from a predominately rural to a more urbanized community in the four-county district, the English Department is planning to expand an "outreach" program whereby instructors teach classes in industrial complexes, factories, or other locations which are more accessible to potential students than Hinds or its two branches might be. Since student enrollment projections reveal that the technical and vocational divisions of the college will increase considerably, an effort by English faculty to be available where needed is both practical and feasible.

The English Department, in an endeavor to improve the quality and methods of instruction, is presently considering several important items. Team-grading in composition, in order to assure more consistent implementation of departmental standards, is a topic of study for some faculty. An effort to reduce maximum class size in composition from twenty-five to twenty students and the reduction of composition teachers' class loads from fifteen to twelve hours per semester are also underway. Various instructors are working with the administration on the budgeting of funds to compensate faculty for in-service training and to finance a departmentally sponsored humanities journal.

Through Hinds Junior College's development from a small agricultural high school to a multi-campus college, the English Department has remained closely attuned to a varied student population and a rural and urban community. The English Department has consistently been an industrious group of individuals sensitive to the needs, interests, and desires of its students. Continual revision of an adaptable curriculum, an active commitment to professional improvement, and remarkable faculty morale have combined to make the English Department at Hinds Junior College in Raymond, Mississippi, an integral part of a progressive institution.

IRA SHOR, EDITOR

Reading and Writing at Staten Island Community College

DEBATES ON PEDAGOGY appear frequently in *College English*. Serious teachers everywhere are looking for and developing methods that 'work.' Doubtless one major cause of the search for new methods has been the great increase in two-year colleges. These schools now enroll millions of students who formerly would not have received higher education. With CUNY's Open Admissions policy, search and debate have become a daily diet in our English I Program. We have had the good fortune to work collectively at SICC. The intent of our program has been to develop student literacy without exacerbating student alienation. We hope that goal is apparent in these teaching papers. We continue trying.

IRA SHOR, *Guest Editor*

Aspects of English at SICC

1. Teresa O'Connor: Pocket History of English I
2. Openers from Sita, Ira, Terry, Joan: Touchstones
3. William Bernhardt: An Approach to Composition through Awareness
4. William Bernhardt: The Reading Study Skills Center
5. Margery Cornwell-Robinson: Who Our Students Are
6. John McBride: The Nature of the Game
7. Ira Shor: Death of the Dangling Participle: The "Language Project"
8. Teresa O'Connor: Latent Literacy: Projects from English I
9. Joan Hartman: Writing Exercises
10. David Doyle: What's in a Name: Writing Each Other's Biography
11. Stephan Khinoy: Against Remediation: The Change-Oriented Classroom
12. Peter Miller: Getting into the Purple Haze: Autobiography in Developmental English
13. Sita Kapadia: Out of the Rut, on the Road

1. TERESA O'CONNOR Pocket History of English One[1]

Just about three years ago, a group of us strongly committed to Open Admissions addressed ourselves to the job of designing a developmental English program. At our original planning meetings we discussed openly our pedagogies

[1]Teresa O'Connor has been director of SICC's English I Program since its inception in 1971.

and our preconceptions about the new students. In addition, we began to confront both our prejudices about each other and our prejudices about teaching "remedial" English. The former involved stereotypes we had held about our classroom styles (the loose, undemanding teacher versus the strict, uncaring one) and the latter involved the notion that teaching "remedial" students has been traditionally regarded as undignified and unrewarding work. We concluded that strong teaching, good teaching, can include many approaches. Out of this came a fundamental aspect of our program: the encouragement of diversity among both teachers and students. No syllabi, assignments, or structure are imposed from without and all decisions are made democratically by the group involved. All of us share responsibility for the functioning of the program—the director teaching courses and the other teachers sharing administrative responsibilities. In this manner we hoped to avoid the bureaucratic pitfalls of the administrator's detachment from students and from fellow teachers, and the teachers' ignorance of administrative realities.

We agreed, in addition, that each teacher of English I would be a volunteer. (Although "remedial" teaching is traditionally unglamorous, there has always been a surplus of regular department faculty requesting to teach in our program.) Each teacher is encouraged to experiment, to discover what works, what doesn't, and what new possibilities our experiences, both individually and as a whole, suggest to us. We also agreed to meet often to discuss these experiences—to exchange techniques, ideas, successes and criticisms. These staff meetings have provided the arena in which we learn to know further our students' needs, in which we confront our preconceptions about what an English class should be, and from which the new things we have been doing and trying are filtered into the rest of our department. (All of us also teach "regular" courses within the department, and other department members often attend our meetings.)

In terms of the structure of our program, there are two main components: small classes of sixteen or fewer which provide a nucleus for group work, and a Skills Center which focuses on highly individualized instruction. Classes are individually or team taught. The simultaneous scheduling of several sections encourages team teaching arrangements, as well as the right of a student who may not work well with one instructor to transfer to a section taught by someone else. We have insisted on maintaining close contact with students so that as soon as a student starts to miss class, the teacher telephones or writes him/her, asking what the difficulty is. This concern often brings back students who might otherwise have disappeared. Obviously, it also becomes a way for students to face and possibly solve the problems that precipitated their non-attendance.

Students are rated on a pass/incomplete basis and no grades are given on any papers that they write. Students who receive an "incomplete" in the course may elect, in the following semester, to work at the Skills Center rather than take the course again. The Center is staffed by teachers in the program as well as by additional reading teachers who do not teach English I sections. Students are encouraged—or, in some cases, required—to attend the Skills Center in addition to their English I classes. We have generally tried to minimize the element of compulsion in our dealings with students, since we have found that when they feel coerced they are often driven away altogether.

Since we wrote our first proposals much has changed. We have virtually abandoned some of our more idealistic plans—like having our students attend all of our planning sessions. We have become more concrete in terms of how to teach reading and writing to our students, how to encourage them to care about their own educations and their own lives. Our enthusiasm has remained intact. We are still committed to discovering what best serves our students who have, in the past, been turned down and turned off by the institutions of education. This means that we have had to reject many of the practices and rituals of those institutions, something that has made us sometimes uncomfortable, even, at times, unliked. We have had to look for, instead, methods and attitudes which will not *insure* the failure of students and which will not belittle their worth as human beings.

2. *Openers from Sita, Ira, Terry, Joan: Touchstones*

Sita Kapany Before I started teaching at Staten Island Community College two years ago, I taught in India and Malaya. Both in terms of location and attitude, I came from places more remote than did any of my colleagues. I could no longer work on the presumption that my students came from academic homes, that they were enthusiastic about learning, that no matter what I did, they would respect me and patiently sit through tedium. I had always taught from textbooks prescribed by Boards of Education. Students had to take a very competitive examination that could make all the difference between a "good life" and near starvation. I needed no magnet to get them to class. They came; they studied diligently. Here my new freedom from prescribed books confused me, till I saw untold possibilities worth attempting.

The wonder and joy of this discovery, however, were effaced by the dismal fact that the students who were to receive these bursts of ingenuity from me were quite different. They came to class with less than half a heart and next to no time for study, for they had to spend much of their time serving hot dogs, painting walls, fixing telephone cables, jabbing away at cash registers or sweeping supermarket floors. This was not all; most of them were broken in spirit, apathetic, purposeless. I began an avid search for ways of helping them. Like the perplexed, oppressed Mayor of Hamelin town, I began with "What can I *do*? What can *I* do? What *can* I do?" The search goes on, for I am not yet fully satisfied. I am glad, though, that I have chanced upon a few happy tunes in the teaching of English.

An idea I have always tried to get across to students is that facility in English or any other field for that matter, is not to be "picked up" in a classroom merely, but developed and discoverd through usage. The more deliberately constant the usage, the higher the results. If they simply walk around with two pieces of flint they won't get a spark, but if they keep rubbing the stones together they will have good reason to expect the spark. It is the same with English. They may use it everywhere, wherever they use their perceptions to name the thing perceived. The little old woman sitting across from them in a bus might be "wearing her hat crooked"—"A smart black hat." Or she could be "wearing a smart black hat, jauntily tilted to one side." It is for them to offer themselves a choice, for learning occurs in the exercise of that choice. It is difficult to judge the actual

usefulness of this guiding light but, time and again, students have reported to me how they wanted to describe something just so and were able to do it because they demanded it of themselves. This desire to verbalize experience helps them grow in and through language. Such a desire is generally absent. It must be kindled with ingenuity, tact, and patience, for it is important to cancel a decade or more of negation. It is important to start again with that boy who could confidently demand your attention with, "See what I can do!"; or the little girl who used to say "Let's do it again." One possible way of creating a comparably happy learning situation is to challenge the student's native intelligence and to respect his or her quantum of experience. Whenever I am able to do this, learning occurs.

IRA SHOR When I was a freshman in 1962, college for the working class was still unusual. Only a minority of high school grads from my south Bronx neighborhood made it through college, and only a fraction went off to elite universities. One thing is as familiar now as it was then: for the worker-student, making grades while making money is so time-consuming that little space is left to question higher education's social roles.

In other ways, 1962 is light years behind us. There have been the civil rights struggles, the anti-war movement, the youth culture, women's and gay liberation, and such third world fights as led to CUNY's Open Admissions policy. Protesting students in 1969 won for all working people in our city a much easier access to CUNY.

For the daily good work our new students are doing in college, Open Admissions should be celebrated and defended. Yet CUNY faces some serious problems. The continued underfunding of Open Admissions by the state makes our classes larger and makes financial aid smaller. Anonymity in class and bankruptcy at home add to the harassed lives our students lead, and encourage them to leave school. Further, the segregation of Open Admissions students primarily into the two-year units of CUNY tends to ghetto-ize rather than democratize higher education. Lastly, the pace of teacher reeducation will be a barometer of the success of Open Admissions. We teachers were trained to be professional transmitters of high culture. Now that we are teaching non-elite students we will have to be retrained for, by, and with the people in our classes.

TERESA O'CONNOR A recurring fantasy of mine goes something like this: one day I will sit down at the typewriter and magically my fingers will transmit stories, critical insights, poetry—all without pain, work, or the incessant need to run to the refrigerator or to tidy up my desk. My dreams aside, despite my capacity to create diversions and the very mixed feelings which I bring to most writing, I finally get down to it. Most of my English I students can't. And I am sure that somewhere, in their own minds, lies the same fantasy compounded by the additional impression that many people, especially English instructors, write with the ease of the sleight-of-hand man.

Like many people, remedial English students approach a difficult task—in this case, writing and reading—with the overwhelming sense of their own inadequacy. They can't write because they can't spell; they can't spell because they can't

read; they can't read because they're 'dumb.' It is rare when they approach a writing problem aware of the things they *can* do. They can speak and be understood; they can aswer questions about what they've said and, at times, they can revise their statements. Their spoken language can be complex, colorful, and witty. Their writing—and they know it—is often tedious, trite, and uptight, characterized by short simple sentences full of little words they feel they can spell correctly. Their writing neither seeks to entertain nor to probe. It is a joyless chore, unrelated to their lives or to their capabilities, to be expedited as peremptorily as possible. The same goes for reading.

From my own experience I know that writing can be difficult, boring, indeed frightening, and that there is often a world of difference between the ease I experience in speaking and the struggle that writing so often involves. I know too that when I have been able to come close to the rhythms of my own speech, close to the naturalness with which ideas occur to me when speaking, then I have been able to generate enough material with which to work. One of the most terrifying aspects of composing is to face a blank sheet of paper feeling that you have nothing worth saying, nothing that anybody in his or her right mind would want to read. And when we lose faith in our own articulateness, we cannot begin to write. This is magnified in my students: they have been designated the failures in high school, with all the negative reinforcement that that state entails, and they are younger than I am, still very much unaware of their own powers which have not as yet been seriously tested outside of school. They believe still in the myth that only "gifted" people do well, and disbelieve in any real relationship between work, concentration, and success.

I suppose then, quite briefly, that I see my work as involving the restoration of my students' faith in their own capabilities and in showing them that work with language, concentration, can be a source of joy and strength and is, ultimately, unmysterious.

Joan Hartman When I started teaching English I at Staten Island Community College my notions about what to do in the course were largely negative: I had a pretty good sense of what I *couldn't* do. The year before I started teaching English I was my first year at Staten Island and also the first year of Open Admissions at the City University of New York. It was a sobering experience for me. My composition classes included students with writing problems more severe than any I'd encountered before. Many of these students just disappeared, and those who stayed were likely to be apathetic, skeptical, and hostile to the course, though not to me personally; they recognized my good intentions. But they'd *had* English; it hadn't taken in the past, and they didn't expect it to take in the present either. They protected themselves from yet another failure with the argument that writing wasn't worth their time and effort; if it was, they claimed, then they could and would learn how to do it.

Over the year I came to see that they were in some sense right: given their lives and their perception of their futures, English as they had known it in high school and as I had known it in the traditional liberal arts college doesn't seem worth their time and effort. I hadn't been trying to teach them the dreary art of

theme-writing—how to extract from a subject enough material to flesh out a piece of writing with a beginning, an end, and a middle of sorts; I'd been trying to enlarge experience of writing and their capacity to deal with material at the college level. But it's one thing to teach students who already know how to produce an acceptable theme and who are challenged by the writing expected of them in most of their college courses, another to teach students who freeze when confronted with a blank piece of paper and who aren't asked to write much in courses other than English. I hadn't met these students where their problems really were, and I'd assumed motivation that simply didn't exist.

I now know what I *can* do in English I, what I consider success when I teach it, and how I justify my procedures and criteria. By turning English I classes into supportive and unthreatening communities of writers—students, student tutors, and myself—and by concentrating on the activity of writing rather than on the product, I can get students to write more fluently and to take some pleasure in it. To the degree that they do I consider my English I classes successful, and as students get back in touch with their own capacities as users of language when they write, these things do happen.

I am extremely careful not to pronounce upon and judge what they write; when I speak, I speak as a member of the class community whose own writing is there to be inspected and commented on along with theirs. For at least half the semester I also ignore the way they transcribe their language when they write, and as I begin to concern myself with their transcription what I emphasize is their capacity to correct themselves. Students in general are alienated from their capacities as users of language by long and painful schooling in the notion that correctness is all-important, and English I students, more alienated than most, need a great deal of experience writing in a different frame of reference to unlearn the habits that fear of writing incorrectly has engendered in them.

3. William Bernhardt *An Approach to Composition through Awareness*

I

My approach to composition is the product of wide reading in the literature of education, attendance at more seminars, conferences, and workshops than I care to count, and the example and inspiration of colleagues and students during my ten years as a college teacher. My greatest debt, however, is to the writings and example of Dr. Caleb Gattegno, creator of the "Words of Color" approach to literacy. My obligations to his work must be apparent in every sentence I write. The basis of my approach can be simply stated:

(1) Writing in a native language is, essentially, neither an art nor a skill.
(2) Writing is a know-how, or functioning, accessible to anyone who already knows how to make spoken statements in the language and who is more or less familiar with the written code of signs for that language.
(3) Criteria for composing—for making statements which make sense, and which express one's intent— are possessed by every native speaker; teaching them is superfluous. What students often lack is awareness that this know-how can be easily transferred to the written language.

(4) 'Skill' in writing is a by-product of experience in the practice of composition. Students who know how to encode their speech can acquire skill through practice if they want to, but no teacher can 'give' it to them.
(5) The teacher's primary responsibility is to serve students by making them fully aware that they *already* possess the functionings which are prerequisites for written composition. This awareness is best conveyed through practical exercises —precepts are insufficient—which require a small expenditure of students' time.

When I survey the approaches to the teaching of composition now in fashion, I find scant acknowledgement of what students bring with them into every college classroom. I see widespread neglect of the functioning linguistic criteria which students possess by virtue of being native speakers of English. All too often, I encounter students who, after years of formal training in English, still write sentences which lack the grammatical coherence and common sense logic of their most casual vocal utterances. After extensive instruction and drill they remain unaware—on the level of their spontaneous functioning—that writing is a form of speech and that the criteria for correctness and adequacy of expression are in their "ears" and not in a text book.

Practice in composition is productive only as certain precise awarenesses become accessible to the students:

(1) They must know that they spontaneously function as native speakers, able to identify the adequacy of English sentences by their 'sound.'
(2) They must know that they can spontaneously generate any number of oral statements (when they have an authentic occasion for doing so) which satisfy the requirements of the English language.
(3) They must know that anything they can utter aloud they can also write (though not necessarily spell correctly).
(4) They must know that they can spontaneously compose in writing as they do in speaking; and that their freedom as speakers in composing many different kinds of statements can be immediately transferred to writing.
(5) They must know that they possess criteria in their ears (and eyes) to correct most of their mistakes in encoding speech.

I try, in my classes, to elicit the awareness I have just outlined. There are many different exercises, both traditional and innovative, which can be used to this end. I am not wedded to any particular classroom format or procedure although I have a preference for small groups, non-institutional settings, and informal social conventions within the class. What is important to me is not the choice of any particular exercise or teaching convention, but whether whatever I choose to do (and I change my techniques constantly) forces these crucial awarenesses. I know that the student who functions with these tools discovers what being a writer is. Although it may be some time before he or she has the confidence (or interest) to attempt all the writing conventions which are part of the traditional curriculum, the most essential stage has been completed.

It must be clear from what has already been said that my approach is focused on composing rather than editing; that its aim is increased facility in expression rather than correctness. This emphasis is not based on an assumption that a high standard of precision in writing is an unimportant or irrelevant goal. On the contrary, I value 'correctness' both in myself and others. I also think that it can be introduced into a writing curriculum prematurely. Until students com-

pose with facility, thereby discovering that writing is an activity which matters to *them*, there is no legitimate reason for focusing their attention on editing what they write so that it can be acceptable to others. It is only when one becomes aware of oneself as a writer—as one who expresses himself in writing—that the need to facilitate communication through a more careful study of the medium is genuinely felt or valuably pursued.

II. Classroom Techniques for Compelling Awareness

1. I generally begin the first class with a brief (15-20 minutes) exercise in learning each other's names. I go round the circle asking each person to say his or her name *once* only but clearly and distinctively. Then I ask whether anyone has got them all. At least one person has always volunteered to demonstrate that he/she has. And by the time two or three people have shown their grasp of the entire set (in a different random sequence each time, incidentally) almost everyone else is able to do it also!

This exercise is challenging to the students and interesting since everyone has had the dismal experience of sitting in classes day after day without possessing even the most minimal information about the person next to him/her.

While they are absorbed in learning the names, I am absorbed in observing them. I want to see whether they can spontaneously hear and utter expressions in their native language; whether their utterance is correct or distorted; whether distortions are detected and self-corrected, etc., etc. This is also an opportunity for me to observe which members of the class are able to surrender to an activity easily; which encounter blocks in doing so; which are unable to enter into the activity until they observe the entry of others, etc., etc.

When I ask the class for spontaneous feedback on its experience in this activity most people provide coherent explanations for their easy acquisition of the names —or rather rationalizations which reveal the disjunction between their concepts and their functioning. Obviously they are very practiced in hearing and retaining English sounds, and in self-correcting when distortions creep in, but they lack consciousness of this facility. Still, knowing that the facility is there, I can evoke consciousness of it whenever necessary by recalling the 'naming exercise' to their attention.

2. If I show the class an unidentified object and ask "What do I have in my hand?" each person can (and does) make a unique verbal response to my question. Their evident ability to summon words to describe something for which they have no previous relevant experience clashes with a preconception—shared by most—that language is imitative rather than expressive. To acknowledge that they can generate language spontaneously and compose vocally at will is, for many, a new awareness. They have always thought of speaking before as a matter of remembering and repeating the words of a book or a teacher's utterance. They have never seen themselves as *makers* of language.

3. I may perform an action, such as falling down, having asked everyone in ad-

vance to prepare to comment vocally on what I do. Then, just at the moment of utterance, I tell them to write what they were going to say.

A similar exercise is to ask each member of the class to dictate a statement to his or her neighbor. This is followed by a request that each person write a subsequent statement himself. When dictation and self-dictation are practiced in this way (without concern for penmanship, spelling, etc.,) all can become aware that they can in fact write down anything for which they have words. The person who has experienced this can never say what so many college students say: "I can't write."

4. Once members of the class know that they can compose vocally and that they can encode anything they are capable of saying, they are ready to undertake the convention known as "free writing." "Free Writing" has been extensively discussed (notably by McCrorie and Elbow) and there is no need to describe it here in any detail. All that really needs to be said is that, as many teachers have observed, most students make the greatest progress in facility *and* correctness of expression when they are repeatedly given a pencil and a sheet of paper and told to compose *continuously* for a set period of time. The teacher does not assign topics or attempt to evaluate the work produced in this way. Thus relieved of distractions, students find that they can spontaneously generate writing to an unprecedented extent. Because they are writing rapidly and with concern only for what they want to say, the flow of words is faster. And because the flow is faster they generally make fewer of those 'mistakes' which result from overly self-conscious, laborious composition—lack of agreement between subject and predicate, confusion of tense, etc.

Many students who know how to write in the sense of (3) still lack facility in composing and imagine that deliberation and care are the key to increased confidence in expression. The opposite is more nearly the case in my opinion. Although penmanship suffers when students write quickly, expression improves in virtually every other respect: vocabulary choice becomes more ambitious, sentence structure becomes more varied, and the student draws on much more of what he knows as a practiced speaker of his own language.

5. The student who has become aware that he/she can compose spontaneously with fluency may not yet feel capable of meeting more formal challenges. He/she imagines that "free writing" is fundamentally different from composition in response to a more delimited assignment. A powerful writing experience which meets this problem can often be generated simply by asking a class to compose, in rapid sequence, the following: a one-sentence true statement; a one-sentence false statement; a ridiculous statement of more than one sentence; a sad statement of more than two sentences; a promise in the form of a paragraph.

Working in this way, it is possible to compel the awareness that when one composes easily in one's own personal convention, it is hardly difficult to enter into others which one might not have chosen. Thus writing a letter in accordance with a very specific set of imposed criteria may, in fact, come to be felt as a welcome relief from the demands of "free writing."

6. It is not at all difficult to evoke the grammatical criteria which all native

speakers of English have in their 'ear.' One need only start a class by asking everyone present to "Please have taken a pencil and beginning to write" and note the confusion which follows. Thus it can be established that, within certain limits at least, everyone present has criteria for correctness and adequacy of expression in English. This awareness can be transferred to the written form of the language by reading passages aloud with the errors included. In this way people become aware that many so-called "errors" in grammar are really the result of minor mistakes during the process of encoding (when keeping in touch with one's meaning is far more important than spelling accuracy). That the problem is not unfamiliarity with the structures of the language is shown by the fact that the student who submits his prose to the test of his own voice and ear generally detects many errors.

The questions I have asked myself and the techniques I have suggested may appear simple and self-evident. I can only say that in my experience they have been amply justified by the results. When students are given an opportunity to gain linguistic awareness of their own functionings, as in this way of working, their interest and enthusiasm are greatly enhanced. Not only do they make progress in expression but they recognize that the responsibility for learning is theirs.

4. William Bernhardt *The Reading Study Skills Center at SICC*

I

What we call our "Reading and Study Skills Center" is a long narrow room—a trailer actually—about forty feet in length. The furnishings consist of a couple of moveable blackboards, some bookshelves, a sofa rescued from the scrap heap, about ten tables such as one finds in institutional cafeterias, and a number of assorted chairs. There are some charts and maps on the walls and an electric coffee maker near the door. With the exception of the brightly colored charts on the walls the physical surroundings are not striking. Those familiar with other reading facilities, however, notice the absence of electronic aids, secretaries, and informational signs. At any one time there may be from one to five teachers present and as many as twenty students. The teachers and students move the furniture about to suit their immediate convenience with the result that the disposition of the room is constantly changing. At any particular time people may be working singly, in twos, or in small groups; they may be standing, sitting, or a combination of both; they may be distributed throughout the room or clustered by one of the blackboards.

Visitors are usually struck by the fact that we have no set procedure for receiving students. We don't give them registration materials to fill out when they arrive nor do we employ standard diagnostic tests. This is quite deliberate. As far as we are concerned, "working individually with students" means acknowledging that their time is too valuable for bureaucratic formalities or indirect measures of "where they are at." If possible, we try to initiate a first session of work instantly. Each faculty member who works in the Center (as part of his/her regular program) has his or her own techniques for ensuring that each minute

the student spends in the Trailer will be devoted to simultaneous diagnosis, instruction, and feedback. Most such techniques involve oral reading, "free writing,"[2] and other activities which allow the teacher to make direct observations of the student's behavior while he or she works on the functionings in which mastery is desired. We feel that this is a way of working in which "individualized instruction" is a reality rather than a slogan.

We make use of a variety of materials—textbooks which are giving the students trouble in their courses, passages and excerpts selected by our staff, and the charts, worksheets, and other teaching aids devised by Dr. Caleb Gattegno as part of his "Words in Color" approach to reading. Although this selection of materials surprises most reading experts who visit our operation, we find them far more flexible (and more attractive to students) than those employed elsewhere. The choice of materials, in fact, seems far less important than constant watchfulness to make sure that the individual student's needs are respected.

Our work with students has shown us that most of the people we see display reading problems which conventional college approaches often do not confront. I can only mention some of these:

(1) Students believe reading is synonymous with recognizing sight words, one at a time.
(2) They are unaware that reading consists of gaining access to the meaning conveyed *by* words rather than by *scanning* words.
(3) They believe that reading is identical with "skimming."
(4) They are unaware of the role of three dimensional mental imagery in reading, especially in such fields as biology, nursing, chemistry, and the social sciences.
(5) They are unaware of the extent to which comprehension and retention are a function of concentration while reading rather than attempted memorization.

In essence, our Skills Center is a research institute in which students and faculty work on problems of teaching or learning which don't seem to yield sufficiently to the approaches taken in the classroom. Teachers in the English I Program who want an opportunity to study the most challenging problems of education request hours in the Center as an alternative to part of their normal course load. The facility is available to any student who wants supplemental instruction in any aspect of English. In other words, those who work in the Skills Center, either as teachers or learners, do so by choice and as part of a wider involvement with the college. Students come to study themselves as learners and to gain academic skills as a by-product; teachers come to study students more closely than is usually possible in the classroom situation. In this way, research and teaching are combined in a single activity.

II. A Way of Working on Reading: Three Case Histories

Ralph came to the Skills Center on the advice of his English teacher who had noticed how slowly he read the assigned materials for the course. He was clearly

[2] See "Classroom Techniques for Compelling Awareness" (p. 952) for a discussion of "free writing."

expecting me to give him a test similar to others he had taken in the past and his certainty that the test would be bad news was written on his face. After he introduced himself I asked him if he would read aloud for me from one of the text books he was holding in his hand. He opened a biology text and began reading slowly and mechanically, word by word. It was obvious that the meaning of the text escaped him but what was even more apparent was his inability to decode sounds accurately. He clearly recognized some words, which he [illegible]ted automatically and clearly, but in most instances he took a tentative [illegible] and came out with a word which shared some of the same sounds but was sufficiently different to make nonsense of the passage. Reading, for him, was a desperate guessing game in which he might, if he were lucky, manage to fasten on a few correctly decoded key words.

Having seen that Ralph's reading problem was at the fundamental level of decoding, I realized that I must begin by increasing his awareness of sounds and their relation to written signs. I therefore directed his attention to a color-coded[1] wall chart on which each of the sounds comprising a word was indicated by a separate color. After a few minutes examination of the chart he was able to make the observation, apparently new to him, that each word was composed not only of letters but also of sounds and that the correspondence of sounds and letters was not a simple one-to-one relationship. He observed, moreover, that no word could be read so that it contained a greater number of sounds than there were colors represented. Indeed, by counting the number of colors in a word on the charts it was possible to be absolutely certain about the number of sounds in the word without being distracted by the number of letters. Furthermore, if he was uncertain about the sound indicated by a certain color he could look elsewhere on the chart for a word with which he was familiar, containing the same color and hence the same sound.

Within twenty minutes Ralph was decoding words on the charts with certainty and enthusiasm. He saw, for perhaps the first time in his life, that reading was not a matter of memorizing unique patterns of letters, with a new act of memorization required for each additional word. During subsequent sessions he became aware that there were certain specific sounds and signs which he tended to misread and he began to correct his own errors. Since we shifted back and forth between the colored charts and texts printed in black and white, he was encouraged to use the teaching aid as a key rather than an indispensable crutch.

During the past two years, since I began using the "Words in Color" materials regularly, I have worked with many people who share Ralph's problem. Most of them had a sufficiently large body of memorized sight words so that their performance on a standardized reading test would often not reveal the primitive nature of their reading difficulty. Whatever problems in comprehension they encountered were rooted in a fundamental confusion about the relation of sounds and signs in the written code of English. Unless their reading came to be based on firmer criteria for decoding they must continue to rely on guesswork and

[1] *The Phonic Code of English, "Words in Color" Approach to Reading* (Educational Solutions, Inc., N.Y.)

retention of a few key words for whatever sense of a passage they were able to glean. Once focused on their own source of difficulty, however, progress was usually rapid.

Margaret also came to the Skills Center on the advice of her English teacher. She complained of being unable to comprehend much of the assigned reading in the courses she was taking and often experienced headaches when trying to read. She wondered if she needed glasses and asked if I could arrange for her to receive an eye examination. I began work with her by asking her to read words on one of the color-coded charts I had used with Ralph. Although many of the words on this particular chart had utterly perplexed Ralph, Margaret was able to decode all of them perfectly. Clearly, her difficulty was not decoding. I then asked her to read a sentence which I made by pointing to a sequence of words on several charts with my pencil. Although she repeated each of the words accurately, it was clear from the uncertainty in her voice that she was not in touch with the meaning of the sentence. Repeated trials showed me that her reading was word-by-word. Since she had to read each sentence several times in order to become aware of the meaning an immense amount of energy and time was required for her to complete even the shortest passage. It seemed likely that her headaches were the result of frustration induced by the amount of labor and time she needed to invest in reading.

Margaret's reading problem, as I perceived it, was essentially a lack of awareness that what matters is not words but meanings. When she spoke her voice conveyed the meaning of what she wanted to say through phrasing, melody, intonation, etc. as well as her choice of words. In reading, however, she was only concerned with words. If I could get her to put her voice into the text as she was decoding she would become aware of the whole burden of reading. I accomplished this by writing a rude statement on the board and asking her to read it with expression and meaning. This exercise showed her that access to meaning was not achieved simply by repeating individual words in sequence but by enunciating them with the additional qualities of a vocal statement. She began to observe for herself that a written statement only made sense when the reader put her voice into it. She also perceived that she could, if she chose, voice a statement virtually rather than actually. That is, she could attribute a voice to what she read without having to utter it aloud.

Prior to working with me Margaret had often been told not to read word-by-word, although I only discovered this later when she confessed it to me. She had always found this injunction mysterious, however, since she did not perceive its importance. It was only when she became aware of writing as virtual speech that she saw the significance of focusing her eyes on more than one word at a time.

Jeanette arrived at the Skills Center on her own initiative. She had seen one of our posters in the hall and felt that we might be able to help her with her problems in comprehending nursing texts. When she read from one of the books which was giving her trouble it was apparent that she had no difficulty decoding sounds or perceiving sentences as meaningful statements rather than sequences of isolated words. She did, however, find it hard to understand the assigned texts and to retain the meaning of what she read. It had been suggested to her that her problem

might be a lack of background in science subjects and she wondered if she had chosen her major wisely.

After Jeanette had read a technical paragraph with accuracy and expression I asked her what she remembered of what she had read. She replied that whereas it had made sense to her as she was reading, she could now only recall the name of the physiological concept which it was the purpose of the passage to explain and illustrate. I then asked her if she could evoke a mental image of the organs involved in the physiological process about which she had read. She confessed that she could not.

It was clear to me that Jeanette's difficulties with this subject resulted from her lack of consciousness of the role of mental imagery in reading. Since she did not recognize that she must 'see' what she was reading about, her entry into the text was on the level of concepts alone. In order to make her aware that she had the ability to evoke imagery through language I presented her with a sequence of oral statements: a brief narrative, a description of a meal, and a description of a medical operation. Thus she began to perceive that she had the power to make mental pictures in response to words. I advised her to draw pictures of things in the text which perplexed her so that she could locate precisely where her problems in comprehension were. She later told me that she found this technique useful and that, in fact, evoking the images mentally was often a sufficient trigger of meaning.

5. Margery Cornwell-Robinson *Who Our Students Are*

When things are still small,
One must not leave them
without nourishment. 5. Hsu, *I Ching*

I have been attempting to teach composition courses in college to a variety of students for ten years. The habitats of these students ranged from a highly competitive four-year college in the City University of New York, to a southern black school, to a private Quaker venture, and finally to Staten Island Community College. I taught these basic courses at the outset of my teaching career by assignment and later by preference. Until I began participating in the Developmental English program at SICC two years ago, I had three rather fixed beliefs about the teaching of writing. First, I felt that writing could not really be taught; I observed that the students who entered a course writing with ease left with the same ease, after dispensing some pleasure to me, and that those who had great difficulty left carrying much the same difficulty, their burdens only superficially lightened by a few thought-provoking discussions. Second, I felt that if ninety people taught composition, ninety people taught it differently, and none successfully. Third, I despaired of ever learning *how* to be more helpful to my students in the act of writing. I was good at caring and rapping, but I was avoiding the main problems. All these attitudes were disturbing to me since I am not generally given to extreme cynicism and hopelessness. Also they did not diminish my belief in the potentialities of my students nor did they mar my basic assumption that real education should bring joy, self-discovery, creativity, and an awareness of freedom and its attendant responsibilities.

What has changed since I came to SICC is that I have begun to believe, to hope. From the honest sharing among teachers, the daring to experiment in classrooms and maybe even act the fool, the insistence on facing the real problems of educating those who often have been called failures by society, and from the refusal to shake heads in despair for long, I have gained faith in myself. I have found reinforcement for some of my processes and have been pushed to analyze others further. This sharing among colleagues does not mean loss of individuality. I know that our actual classrooms differ in many ways. I continue to feel strongly that one must choose a classroom approach consistent with his or her personality, remembering constantly that he/she is failing if he/she is a petty monarch. Certain exercises which other teachers in English I use have not worked for me, but I am free to judge how to adapt them or to abandon them. I will never work with one group of English I students in the same way as with another group or as another colleague would. These sessions must be custom-made to suit the needs of each group and the individuals in the group, including me. But always I am able to say to Peter, Bill, John, Ira, or Sita, my colleagues and my friends, "What went wrong? What did you do when . . .?" or "Let me tell you what I tried," and they will listen. This has never happened to me before, and my students know it.

I find it easiest to explain what is happening with my students and me, our processes, experiments and expectations, by describing the students themselves. It is also important that those reading about our program at SICC be aware of the nature of our clientele. Therefore, I present six case studies, character sketches.

Linda Novecki hated everything about high school, but mainly she disliked regulations. She was an extremely articulate girl who probably talked her way out of too many situations and so became unsure of her own sense of responsibility. She knew I didn't take attendance and also that I didn't even want her to come to class if she was going to be visibly bored. Since this was her first term of such freedom she attended erratically, but from what she said I think she was there more than she was in her high school English classes.

As a result of participation in our class, Linda changed her program, moving from a rather traditional curriculum which was depressing her and causing her to cut many classes to one in the experimental unit of the college. Hopefully, when Linda takes the composition course required there, she will be ready to do more writing and look at it more carefully. Her needs to slay the dragons of authority and regimentation, to test her freedom, have been accepted and somewhat dissipated. By forcing her to be responsible for some of the actual successes and failures of the class, we helped her to see herself as a responsible and worthwhile person, not just a hostile and frustrated one. Also, by entering an experimental program, she will have an optimal opportunity to develop further this experience of believing in herself.

Joseph Farella was a bus driver who worked all night and went to school most of the day. This is not unusual at SICC where most of the students follow somewhat the same routine. What was unusual about Joe was his enthusiasm. He took Developmental English by choice because he had been out of the academic world for a long time, serving in the Navy and earning a living. As with most of our English I students, he was in his first college experience.

Joe said, "I was paralyzed by the idea of college. I felt stupid, inadequate. After

two weeks of this class I relaxed, enjoyed myself, and found enough self-confidence to participate in all my classes."

Joe has done extremely well in subsequent English courses he has taken. While he was a unique student in English I and probably could have handled the demands of the regular composition course, I think he would not have been as happy and unencumbered with his explorations as he became after experiencing our class.

Dorothy Costello tiptoed her way through parochial school, quietly escaping everyone's notice, afraid to announce that she was unsure how to write a complete sentence. She was almost angry at our intrusion when she got excited about creating a story in a small group with three other students. Gradually she volunteered to read her writing in class. The free writing exercises were good for Dorothy because no one saw the results in the beginning. Writing slowly became a useful tool for someone who desperately needed some means of communication.

She eventually shared leadership of a discussion on women's liberation and engaged in a certain amount of verbal horseplay in class. Now she keeps a diary.

Melvin McNeill fell victim to a computer snafu which landed him in a regular freshman composition class for three anguished weeks before he arrived at the door of our trailer. He felt, as he had many times before, that he was just another stupid black kid who was behind again.

Melvin should probably have continued to work with me the following term in the Skills Center. He had a lot more confidence when he left than when he arrived, and he is still in school two terms later, but I'm afraid that he's just slipping by, adding a few more scraps to the patchwork. He is definitely capable of developing good thought but needs desperately to feel that someone will labor with him each step of the way.

Frank Roselli's father had lots of money. Througout the years whenever Frank got into trouble in school his father bailed him out. Frank was a fast talker, an extremely conservative guy who cared a lot about wearing the right kind of clothes. I think some of his confrontations with class members taught him most of what he learned in his English I class. Because he didn't attend class regularly, he was unable to participate completely in the closeness of the group. Some of the other students even urged him to come more. It was difficult for him to accept the ground rules that the class had adopted about listening to each other's point of view. He did not see a good rap session as enhancement of a writing period, but rather a way to avoid it.

Frank's story isn't finished yet. For the final grade, I gave him an Incomplete, which means for him that he has to visit me on an individual basis in the Skills Center for the following term. It remains to be seen whether he shows or not.

Jean Toulouse came to the United States from Haiti two years before he came to English I at SICC. He has been struggling financially to remain in the U.S., doing night guard jobs, selling encyclopedias, collecting unemployment. He spoke interesting English; his vocabulary was quite large. Only his pronunciation troubled us occasionally. He wanted to learn to speak and write "correct" English, as he felt he had picked up much slang. We discussed in class the fact that while in French there is one "correct" way to speak and write, in English there are many alternative "correct" forms. Jean brought a life-knowledge and sophistication to the class that most of the other students found strange, and when they worked in small groups Jean constantly questioned pat answers and conventional veiws, often to the consternation of his fellow students. One of the greatest advantages of English I classes at SICC is the heterogeneity of the constituents in age, ethnic background, and experience.

Jean's writing was a clear reflection of his difficulty with English. He left many words out and confused many verb forms. The process of reading a paper aloud

to locate the errors was extremely beneficial for him. While I rarely saw the students' papers before they were read to me in class or during conference, most students, including Jean, corrected great numbers of mistakes if they read their papers aloud exactly as written with no interpolations allowed, listening to the rise and fall of their own voices. I never gave a grade on a paper. All corrections were verbally given and discussed in class or conference. Although the only grades given at the end of the term were Pass or Incomplete, only a small percentage of my students saw this as a reason to do little work. Many, like Jean, put in extra hours at their own demand.

Jean will spend more time with me in the Skills Center as he grows increasingly proficient in the use of written and spoken English.

6. JOHN MCBRIDE *The Nature of the Game: English I at SICC*

The Time: a fickle October afternoon, 1964.

The Place: an institution-green, cinder-block classroom in a private Catholic high school in Brooklyn's Park Slope section, a neighborhood midway between fashionable and deprived.

The Characters: forty freshman boys, the sons of the lower middle class, sitting grid-like, neatly jacketed, tied and silent; one young, apprehensive fact-packed, English teacher, appropriately suited and tied; one English department chairman, bored by the responsibility of observing this young untenured teacher.

The Event: A thirty minute lesson on the Adverb, which, with questions and exercises, may hopefully be extended until the end of the forty-two minute period.

The Finale: "For homework, write ten sentences illustrating the functions of the adverb. In your assignment, include examples of the following: a simple sentence; a compound sentence; a complex sentence; a compound-complex sentence." The bell rings, the young teacher inwardly sighs and deflates, and the department chairman slides towards the door, casting glances of satisfaction and approval. The forty boys are still neatly jacketed, tied and silent. Nothing has been disturbed; the system endures.

In the nine years since that October afternoon, I have recognized some personal truths about writing and the writing process.

1. Writing should not be confused with grammar.
2. Writing should not be confused with obedience to the conventions of spelling and/or the conventions of standard English usage—the observance of linguistic etiquette. What such procedures do guarantee is the destruction of a student's sense of Self.
3. Good student writing seldom emerges from teacher-imposed theme topics. Writing is the chaos, the adventure and the process, of discovering and confronting the uniqueness of the Self.
4. Just as we learn to dance by dancing, to swim by swimming, we learn to write by writing. As teachers we must continually provide occasions for student writing in all forms.

5. The student must be constantly stimulated not only by reading aloud varied examples of literature, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by reading aloud his/her own work to the class.

I begin all my English I classes with the following verbal/written exercise:

Each member of the class, including myself (I usually initiate the process), takes 2-3 minutes to tell the others as much about himself/herself as he/she feels comfortable doing. Questions are allowed to extract more specific information and/or to clarify statements previously made. Though most students function quite capably within the parameters of this exercise, there are some students who become terrified and reticent by the demands of public disclosure, and I try to alleviate their tension and extend their verbal discourse by asking them questions they can comfortably answer. For example, "You said you lived in Bensonhurst, correct? Did you ever eat in that Chinese Restaurant on the corner of _____? Your face has something familiar about it. Did you ever work in Macy's on King's Highway?"

When everyone has orally presented himself/herself to the class, I ask each student to write an answer to one of the following questions: 1) "What do you think was the purpose of this exercise? Try to be honest and not schoolish, e.g., don't try to coddle me by trying to determine what was *my* intent." 2) "If you think the exercise was of no significance—foolish, dumb, stupid—then state why. Again, I am asking for honesty, not coddling."

When a sufficient period of time has elapsed, I ask each student to read his/her written response. Again, questions by other members of the class may be asked of the reader about his/her statements. For the most part statements are short, vague and disguised, that is, they are unsure of the situation; however, a few daring students respond with such honesty and vigor that they shock and puzzle the others in the class. This type of response is so vital to the process of the class that I anxiously wait in anticipation and fear that it will not emerge.

My reasons for this opening exercise are fundamentally important to the semester process of the class:

1. It introduces the students to the forms of languaging—reading, writing, verbalizing—that they will be participating in throughout the semester.
2. It rapidly begins to create a mood of informality, friendliness and group-consciousness.
3. It immediately and concretely establishes the English I classroom as an environment of mutuality and exchange.
4. It demonstrates that sharing one's skills and knowledge with others is learning which involves the whole person; it is an active, functional learning as opposed to the passive, get-along learning demanded by most school environments.
5. It establishes that most of the semester writing done by the student will be shared with the class. The distinction between teacher and learner becomes less distinct and recognizable.

Group Events

1. Dramatic Situation. The class is broken into groups of four and each group is then asked to take a piece of dialogue and write the story implied, or extend a piece of dialogue until it makes a story.

Dialogue:

It's not fair!
You'll do as I say—I'm the boss around here.

Extension:

Wife: Why should I have to be deprived of a few luxuries, even the barest needs. I want something before I age any more.
Husband: You're too extravagant and are not capable of handling the money. We don't need the things you want! What would we do with a rug, chair, and trip to Europe? Anyway, after you got those, you'd just make another list of things.
Wife: I feel I have a say in our marriage because I work. It's my money, too, you know. If I die, your next wife will get a life of ease, while all I get is suffering.
Husband: If you don't like it, get out!
Wife: I will not! This is my father's house. You get the hell out!
Husband: You'll never get me to leave. My prize possessions are here—my records, my tapes, my sound system. It would take me weeks to duplicate this setup.
Wife: I know I'll have to dynamite you out. Everywhere I walk the ugly things you prize stab me.

This short dramatic piece led to the following activities:

1. description of husband and wife—their life style, attitudes, etc.
2. meaning conveyed by intonation, gesture, movement, etc.
3. performance of the skit by the class.
4. involved and prolonged verbal-written investigation of roles, marriage, etc.

A variation of this exercise is to distribute a wide variety of dramatic pictures (I collect them from books, magazines, newspapers, museum postcards), and ask each group to extend, by dialogue, the situation depicted in its selection.

2. Random Words. Usually, the class begins each meeting by "free writing" for ten minutes. To prevent "free writing" from becoming a monotonous chore, I have tried the following: I randomly go around the class circle and ask each person to give me one word, which I immediately write on the blackboard. Then I ask the class to break into groups and compose a piece of writing containing all the suggested words. Invariably, one or more groups will have difficulty structuring a response with the forms of the words given. This will lead them to ask if another word like it—they usually mean another form—can be substituted for the one presenting difficulty. Of course, I allow such substitutions.

Example: share, peace, money, car, female, blackboard, weather, music, job, love, clock, time, hospital, system, death, bird.
"The hospital is huge and spreading. Because of donations by people afraid of death, it is constantly having wings stitched on to it. Death's stench is in every corridor, from the noisy white emergency room to the quiet green of the isolated operating rooms. The white, silent face of the clock marks the passing of beings who can no longer be loved physically. The time of death is also indicated by a black-robed female who stands outside the main operating room. Her job is to record the passings on the blackboard, her score sheet. There are no windows in this hospital for fear that the stench of death and decay will escape to warn the passers-by what awaits them. The eyeless hospital holds its secret and shares it with no one, not even the dumb singing birds. There is no peace. Everything is fake. The happy music we think we hear is a disguise to hide the pain."

3. Immediate Need. Most English I students' lives are fragmented; their lives in school have remained separated from their lives outside of school. They do not perceive that a skill learned in school could be of use in their lives outside of

school. One of the purposes of this exercise is to dissolve this sense of separateness —to illustrate, by a particular example, that this does not have to be so. Also, being presented with concerns that are immediate, ones that they are experiencing now, is one of the most effective methods of provoking self-initiated learning. When students are placed in a personal rhetorical situation, they learn writing forms naturally and automatically from the immediacy of the experience. Such excursions, of course, cannot be programmed; they must occur naturally from events that affect the class as a group or from events that affect one member of the class. Two such languaging events (one group/one individual, both of which went beyond the completion of the semester) have happened since I have been teaching at S.I.C.C.: the New York State Legislature's threat to end Open Admissions, and the attempt by a woman in the class to get a fire hydrant removed from the middle of her lawn. Both of these projects involved many processes: 1) the gathering and processing of essential information for the writing of class letters —who, what, where, how; 2) debating the content, form, and language of the letters; 3) writing, editing, re-writing; 4) the structuring of responses to the class letters, preparing possible counter arguments to the class writings.

Individual Events

1. Collage. This exercise requires the individual student to perform related activities: a) he/she is asked to create a non-verbal collage which he/she believes symbolizes some facet of his/her personality, e.g., warmth, loneliness, suspicion, generosity, gregariousness, etc.; b) he/she must then explain how and why the arrangement of items, shapes, colors, textures that went into the composition of the collage collectively symbolize this personality trait. During the class anonymous individual collages are circulated and examined by each student, and he/she then must write a response to the composition, e.g., what meaning did you abstract about the creator of this collage. Individual papers are read, questions are raised, the collage reexamined, and, if the student creator volunteers, he/she explains the composition of the work. You'll have to imagine the collage, but the following response is typical.

> I chose to isolate my self-centeredness from all my other personality traits. The black circle represents my self-centered world. It is what has become of my life. I have shrunk in the universe. Concerns for my wants so control my life that I feel that I am possessed, in a warped way. I do not believe that I am vain nor do I think highly of myself. My self-centeredness is different; it is a fear of everything. Everything is Fear. Life is fear, death is fear, driving is fear. This black evil has shrunk myself and my world.

2. Response to Music. Playing a non-identifiable, classical music selection often stimulates interesting student writing. Before I continue, two cautions are necessary. First, avoid currently popular selections—whatever they may be at a particular moment –because I have found from experience that they usually don't have any distinct power to generate lengthy student responses. Second, avoid selecting pieces that have become associated with a particular consumer product (Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture"—Quaker Puffed Rice), television commercial shows (Rossini's "William Tell Overture"—The Lone Ranger), or movies (Strauss's

"Also Sprach Zarathustra"—*2001: A Space Odyssey*). Once I failed to make the image connections between Rossini's "William Tell Overture" and the Lone Ranger. Most of the responses to the selection were Lone Ranger focused, although I did get one dynamic reminiscence of childhood. Here is a response to Movement #4—Dvorak's "Symphony No. 5":

> The baton is waved. The conductor leads them on. He thinks to himself that this is his finale. The thrill, the enthusiasm to lead is over. Little do they know. They follow blindly each little movement, each little wave. The audience sits in silence—memories are floating. The world is for the living; it must be savored. The stage will remain in dusty darkness. The audience will vanish. Freedom must be tried—one must change, not stagnate.

Many English I students arrive at S.I.C.C convinced that they are language failures without the slightest glimmer of hope. Twelve years of a demeaning, deadening education have critically interrupted and stifled their language learning. As I perceive it, my purpose in English I is to overcome this negativism of self by having them demonstrate to themselves that they are the possessors and potential wielders of complex language skills which can be of use in the process of their lives. In short, I wish to infuse some of the "ecstasy" of learning.

7. Ira Shor *Death of the Dangling Participle: The "Language Project"*

Imagine studying something for twelve years and twelve years later you are not much better at it than when you began. Imagine reading and writing for twelve years and rarely reading and writing about who you are and what's being done to you and what it is you need to be free and whole.

That has been life for my students and for me, in school. Knowing this, I decided not to run my courses as a thirteenth year version of what came before. With my students, I try to fracture the stifling gestalt of lower education.

This means learning together what we already know but don't yet articulate as knowledge. This means making us all responsible for their educations and mine. This means redesigning my expertise and my profession, beginning where my students are, demystifying the pedestal of intelligence.

These ideals have yielded some useful practical points:

1. Class should be informal and plain fun. We sit in a circle, call each other by first names, don't raise hands but speak by mutual consent.
2. Personal experience as a resource for writing is crucial. We write about, read about, and analyze our lives, in the situations and institutions we live in.
3. "Voicing": Most of my students arrive speaking well in a colloquial idiom. I ask them to read out loud a lot, whenever they write in class, using the built-in grammar of their voices to edit their writings.
4. We write a lot in class. A working class student's life, in the home and on the part-time job, lacks the time and repose for her or him to work well off-campus. Also, the daily lives of my students offer few writing opportunities, so class writing is a form of language-skill exercise.
5. Instead of using a mystifying code for manuscript corrections, I write personal letters to the students, attaching the letters to their papers, without grading them.
6. In many private tutorial conferences, I go over grammatical nitty-gritties, and find myself giving academic, career, and personal advice also.

7. The pace of the class matches the pace of the students' learning. If there is a complaint about the work, or an inability to go on, we stop, talk over the value of what we're doing, then go on, or change the work.
8. Class direction is a subtle mixture of what I have in mind and what the students are interested in doing. Wherever possible, my classes do work on long-range language projects.

The "language project" is a collective and individual event, taking several weeks, in which writing, reading, and analysis are brought to bear on authentic experience. Language skills are not taught or drilled as professionally abstracted phenomena, but are provoked existentially in the completion of the project. In a language project we produce a document which is a model ideological/personal reconstruction of a piece of life.

The overall purposes of a language project may be described like this:

1. To legitimize and provoke writing and reading through their use in the analysis of immediate experience.
2. To provoke a student's ability to think conceptually and structurally about her or his daily life, and to think critically about the concepts handed to them by socializing agencies (school, church, media, family).
3. To combat the subordinate mentality forced upon students by making them work together, and receive and offer from each other serious criticism, in a project which can't get done unless the students write both individually and in groups. (I only initiate the project. Students have to pick it up as something they want or need for it to reach completion.)

I have tried four language projects in my remedial classes. Three were good successes. The fourth was what we call in our program the Great CB, or Colossal Bomb. A fifth is now underway. The successes were the writing of a new constitution for the United States, the writing of a marriage contract, and the writing of bylaws for our English class. The failure was an attempt to produce a "student survival handbook." The handbook was supposed to analyze and suggest solutions to a wide range of student problems (money, commuting, sex, parking, course requirements). It was too ambitious. After that class had produced its own bylaws, the totality of student life was too large for it to reconstruct. Excerpts from the completed documents are included in an appendix.) The project now underway is correspondence with a steel mill where the workers took over and increased production 32%.

The constitution project led not only to a document but also to a very interesting television show, planned and acted by my remedial class, and eventually shown to people outside of class. We got into the constitution idea through long discussions and writings on sexuality. Writing to questions like "What should a man or woman be?", we wrote short papers on sex roles, and then on homosexual encounters. Following that, we put together a small document about what sexual life should be in a free and democratic society. Our class then chose to do the same for labor. By term's end, we managed to add a preamble to the articles on sexuality and labor, and then to design a TV show from them. A good friend who is gay was a big help in the project, as he sat in on our sexuality discussions, and was later "on trial" in the TV show. On videotape, we convened the new governing body in America, the neighborhood council, to hear charges brought against

a homosexual teacher. Both sides raised serious political and moral issues, appealing to the new constitution as they argued their cases. Ultimately, the gay teacher won his right to continue working in the local school.

Our work on the language projects includes group editing as well as writing and debating. For each piece of the constitution, each student wrote her or his version, which then went through committee discussion. The committees were composed of students only and they had to work out together what statement to present to the class. When the class convened as a whole to hear each committee's report, we all debated the proposed provisions, and accepted, amended, blended one provision with another, or rewrote entirely.

The marriage contract took nearly as long to do as the constitution (5-6 weeks).[4] In this project questions of labor and sexuality were raised in a different way, through a consideration of family life. Most of my students came from nuclear families (some are orphans) and most see their future as involved with a family (some are homosexuals and convinced single people). For the vast majority, analyzing marriage and writing a marriage contract raised many questions of sexual politics in which the students' own experiences provided a fund of information and expectation.

We first wrote about what each of us expected from marriage, discussed these ideas, and then broke marriage down into its functional components. For each component we formed a committee to draft a provision for the contract. In committee each student first drafted her or his own version of the provision and then the committee jointly chose what to present to the class. The committees presented their reports serially, and the class convened to debate them. Provisions on "housework" and "child raising" led to intense debates about sex roles: Who should cook and do the dishes? What toys for boys and girls? What sex education for them? "Adoption" led to discussions about racism: Should couples adopt children of a different race? What became clear as we proceeded is that an everyday piece of life had an ideology and a structure to it. Conceptual thinking led to reconstructive writing, as attitudes towards sex roles changed with the debate.

The marriage contract raised important issues, but it also left unanswered or too briefly touched other important questions. For example, the document speaks primarily to heterosexual monogamy and not to homosexual marriage or to communal living. Also, the document only begins to consider how partners can support each other in combatting consumerism. Lastly, the contract presupposes a stable income, and does not consider unemployment, the welfare family, or how one isolated nuclear family makes a connection to its neighborhood. Even as a partially complete document, it represents a process of bringing together a strange group of alienated students to examine their past, present, and future lives.

The bylaws project was similar in organizational form to the marriage contract work. On the very first day of class I entered the room incognito and began quietly discussing, with some of the students nearby, the nature of power in the classroom. As our conversation heated up others in the room took notice and

[4] In "Anne Sexton's 'For My Lover . . .': Feminism in the Classroom" (May, 1973 *College English*) I discuss in greater detail a larger language project leading to a marriage contract.

began to join in. It was amusing for all of us when they began to realize that I was the teacher. Our discussion of power continued: who sat where; who spoke how; who asked the questions; who gave what kind of answers; who was called by what name or title; who took the initiative. And so on, until we again broke down the classroom into its functional and experiential components. Then we formed committees to draft provisions governing each of the components. For a while after we adopted them the bylaws were truly operable in the classroom, but then we ran into the failed project, the "student survival handbook," and with that demoralization, only parts of the bylaws remained in effect. It seemed to me that the election of a rotating chairperson, and the use of the Chinese neuter pronoun "ta" to avoid the sexist use of "his," were genuine political breakthroughs that the class supported through its bylaws.

Writing the bylaws made the question of power real, immediate, and open. Change of power from the teacher to the students depended on analysis, editing, and writing—the preparation of a governing document the class designed for itself. People in class were forced to ask how much power they really had and how they thought power should be configured in the classroom and, by extension through our debate, in society generally. A great many energies were released by this process and for most of the semester that class of remedial people demonstrated an intelligence, articulateness, and enthusiasm for debate that was astonishing.

The language project now underway began from a reading exercise I used. I Xeroxed from the newspaper an article on a steel mill taken over by the workers and asked everyone to read it in class and summarize it immediately. We then went around the room and compared for detail each person's written summary. A discussion was provoked when I asked a series of questions: Is management necessary? Would you want to work in such a mill? What kinds of bosses have you had? A torrent of work autobiography poured out from almost everyone. With such explosive energy in the topic, I decided we should go on with it. I figured that we could write to the mill and ask how things were going now, eight months after the take-over. We first discussed the kinds of things we would want to know about the mill's new worker control. Then we had to talk over whether we should write to the union or to the management. All but three people in class decided to write to the union. Then each person drafted in class her or his first copy of the letter, which I read at home. Most letters were in one long poorly written paragraph. Some were very good. I handed back the letters in class and suggested a multiple paragraph form which could be used to put together a good letter. In class, everyone went to work on a rewrite, and produced uniformly improved letters. I broke up the class into four committees and asked each committee to read to themselves their rewrites and to choose which letters or which blend of letters it wanted the class to send. Following this group editing, a delegate from each committee wrote her or his committee's choice on the board. As a convened class we discussed each letter and voted for a synthesis of two of them. We sent one letter to the union and one to the plant's chief manager, and received replies. What was most encouraging to see was the seriousness of the group editing. In committee, and at the board, people really examined the letters and began making corrections and clarifications on each other's work. Follow-up: If the

management of our college were suddenly in student hands, how would you run it?

The completion of a language project is a very high moment for me and for the class. As a teacher, I learn from my students' articulated experiences, and learn also how to do the project better next time. Further, one project tends to suggest another: the TV show grew out of the constitution, the redesign of our college by the students may grow out of the steel mill correspondence, and TV shows in a "life before and after the document" mode could grow out of both the marriage contract and the bylaws. Ultimately, a successful language project merges autobiography with ideology, personal experience with conceptual analysis, until writing and reading are no longer awesome or arduous or plain irrelevant and impossible tasks for my students to perform. In the service of life's reconstruction, English becomes credible because language becomes useful.

Appendix to Part 7: *From the Language Projects*

On Labor: From the Constitution

Labor is the backbone of our industry and our economy. The way controlling capitalists, executives and politicians misuse labor today in industry and business is not the way we the working class would like it. The evidence to back-up these two statements is unemployment, welfare, and poor working conditions, in the U.S.

In our new community a person should establish a quota of work credits per year. This would be their goal and motivation. This would prove their success to the community. When people work these hours they will be rewarded by being able to have anything materialistic in their society according to their needs. People who can't work or are unable to work will receive disability credits provided they have reasonable proof they are unable to work.

Each individual should have the opportunity to become anything she or he wants. In order to make this possible education in different jobs should be available at all times. If one has learned to be a common laborer and feels she or he has the potential to better his or her educational and occupational status this should be available.

Children after completing junior high school should receive on the job training on every job in the community. On the job training would also give a child work credits. Classes would be held in factories, laboratories, and other places according to the job. Teaching of skills, humanities, arts, sciences, and technology would be open to everybody wherever people work, and not just to school children.

The way in which one should get her or his income should be according to her or his needs, regardless of that person's position in society. There should be a type of centralized store, a place where one receives her or his needs. In other words you work for the community and the community cares for your needs. Each individual will have access to personal needs as well as community goods. This will be on a sharing basis and each individual will be responsible for the goods they use. People who have more dependents such as children under sixteen will receive a little more credit for their job. Equal distribution will be according to the size and need of a person's household.

Jobs should be open to rotation so that individuals will not be stuck in menial labor or unpleasant conditions for a long period of time. This will also break up class distinctions and make for a more united community. People who are in menial labor or who are unhappy with their present jobs should contact special labor unions to see what jobs are open for rotation at that time. Upon mutual agreement and consent of the involved people rotation can be permitted. No individual will be in a higher position than anyone else. There will be a vertical division of labor where everyone works side by side, doing the total job, instead of over each other. Access to all administrative and technical levels will be achieved through education.

On Sexuality: From the Constitution

1. Sex will not be a commodity. You can't buy it and you can't use it to win favors.

2. Sex education will be taught along with all subjects in school. From first grade all forms of sexuality and sexual diseases will be treated, so as to make them understandable.

3. Sex will not be compulsory. No forced sexuality (rape) permitted. Neighbors cannot demand sex from each other. Free to choose, free to refuse.

4. All modes of sexuality will be socially acceptable as long as the people doing them voluntarily choose it.

5. Sections of community parks will be reserved for people who want to have sex out-of-doors. Other parts of the park will be used for non-sexual recreation in daylight hours, and for those neighbors offended by public display of sexuality. All neighbors are expected to exercise sexual freedom with taste, tact, and consideration for other people's activities.

6. A large community center will be built in each neighborhood, one floor or section of which shall be available for sexuality. Those using that section shall decide for themselves how to run it, with due respect to each person's sexuality.

From the Marriage Contract

I. Raising Children

In order for children to grow to be happy, stable, individuals, they must be reared in an atmosphere of peace and security.

1. Children should not be frightened of their parents. For example, when parents are having an argument or important discussion, it should not take place in the presence of children. The effect of such an experience is shattering to children. This must be avoided.

2. To encourage children's abilities and talents, give them confidence by consistent praise, build trust, insure love, be patient and understanding. These factors will enhance their self-image.

3. Be a protector in a favorable manner. Do not neglect the children.

4. Children should be disciplined in such a way that they should not lose love or respect for their parents. For example, they must realize their wrong-doing and take their punishment as a fair, reasonable, judgment. Of course, in this action, we must assume that parents will use appropriate tactics. One thing not allowed is cruel beatings by parents towards their children.

5. Sex should not be tabooed. Parents should realize this is a natural drive in humans. Therefore, children should be as free and open about it as seems possible. Parents should have discussions with their children about sex without feeling embarrassed or ashamed.

6. Do not stereotype the child by prohibiting any activity that you feel is not appropriate for their sex. For instance, girls will be allowed to play with trucks and boys will be able to have dolls without any hassle or intimidation by their parents or friends. Children will be able to express themselves, thus giving more room for creative abilities to develop. Parents will let their children pursue what they feel they'll be happy with.

7. In teaching children about other children, parents should not be biased in their opinions. They should encourage their children to have friends in all denominations but should not pressure the children into it. Parents should point out that there are

good and bad types of people in every group. They should not lead the children to believe that because one person from a group is bad that all members of that group are bad.

8. When helping children with problems, parents should remember that they were once kids themselves.

II. Housework

1. Housework should be shared between husband and wife, especially if they both hold jobs.

2. The couple should take turns on deciding on who should do the work which has to be done. Neither partner should be told what to do.

3. In case of illness, one mate should take on the responsibilities of the other.

4. Cooking can be done by the mate who enjoys it more, or whose schedule makes it more convenient for him or her to do it. Each mate should teach the other how to cook. Whoever doesn't cook, does the dishes, on any night.

5. In fixing minor and major repairs, the man is more likely to know how to do it, but he should teach his wife how to do them also.

6. Dusting, washing, waxing, vacuuming, bed-making and laundry and shopping can be shared mutually. Shopping should be done by either but not by both, because if both go they are likely to spend a lot more money than expected, and if the family is very budget-minded, this can be a disaster.

7. If one mate is working and the other is not, the mate working outside the home will be responsible only for weekend cooking, heavy housework, and sharing shopping and laundry duties.

By-Laws For Running Our Class

Our class has written, debated and accepted the following rules:

1. People in class will not speak only at the teacher when they talk, but will speak to everyone, or to the person they want to respond to.

2. The teacher is not always the only one responsible for filling up silences, and for keeping the conversation going.

3. When the teacher is absent, all students will still be responsible to remain in class and do the 15 minutes free writing. After the free writing is finished any questions regarding the free writing should be directed to the tutor. After the assignment is done the class can pick someone to be chairperson of a discussion on any subject agreed upon by the students. The class meets twice a week and we can't afford to miss such a valuable lesson. And we should learn how to conduct the class when the teacher is absent because this shows us that we can conduct the class ourselves and we are intelligent and responsible enough to do our work.

4. Attendance will be voluntary and people will come if they feel the class is benefitting them. If the class is not benefitting the students, then the students will make the class into something which serves their needs.

5. The class, being as informal as it is, has decided that it will be permissible for students or instructors to call each other on a first name basis. Calling each other by first names doesn't let one feel superior over someone else, as if Mr., Miss, Mrs., etc., were used.

6. No one is forced to say anything, except ta* should keep in mind ta duty as being part of the class to contribute to the class, by giving ta view, no matter how little it seems. Everyone should have an opportunity to talk at one time or another, not just letting the same person or persons talk and carry on discussion. But no one should be forced or called on to talk, if ta feels ta has nothing to say. Because forcing someone to talk might cause some differences between those persons trying to force ta to talk. This may cause ta to reject the class altogether.

*Note on ta: In this day and age of women trying to become equal to men, we think it is necessary to invent a word that refers to both men and women. The reason such a word is needed is because there are instances when it can be used. For lack of a better word we shall adopt the word *ta* which in the Chinese language means, he, she, him, her.

7. Raising hands and interrupting people:
   a. The chairperson will be rotated each class session for discussion.
   b. A person who hasn't spoken yet has priority to speak over someone who has spoken already.
   c. A person can use any symbol to interrupt the conversation, raising hand or politely interrupting.
   d. Male and female should be recognized equally, equal respect to all. Anytime someone speaks, there should be a feeling of donation to each other.

8. We can relate better if we sit in a circle. Everyone should sit where ta wants to. You should sit where you feel most comfortable and not in an assigned seat. The only time you should assign a seat is when ta can't give lesson because of continuous disruptions of people sitting next to each other or when ta doesn't trust someone taking an exam because ta thinks they are cheating. The decision of a chairperson to move a student has to be approved by the class.

8. TERESA O'CONNOR *Latent Literacy: Projects from English 1*

What I do in English 1 classes is different from term to term because both my students and I change. However, there are certain procedures which remain constant, procedures which I believe are useful for a writing class. This includes our physical arrangement—we always sit in a circle (unless we are involved in special individual work) and call each other by first names; we begin most sessions with "free" or "automatic" writing and subsequently read, criticize, and revise much of that writing. The class tutor and I work on virtually every project that the rest of the class is doing including the writing and reading of our own work. Furthermore, everybody is encouraged to draw upon all of her or his experiences in the writing exercises, in the hope of avoiding the situation where students write what they think teachers want—the safe, wooden, innocuous prose that is supposed to keep us busy.

"Free writing" is difficult at first for some students. A particularly useful variation of it includes the following stipulation: that a word or phrase be called out by someone to initiate the writing and that when someone says "Go!" everyone must write without stopping during the allotted time.[3] This forces those students

[3]Phrases called out have ranged from concrete words like "feet," "walls," and "teeth" (all, of course, open to levels of interpretation and association), to abstractions like "freedom." I have found that the concrete words usually lead to more exciting work—partly, I think, because in writing from the concrete students tend to use fewer cliches, which means that not only is their expression more original but the differences between their works provide a basis of interest and comparison.

who feel completely blocked to put something down that they can perhaps work with later or which at least immediately convinces them that it is possible to cover a sheet of paper with language. Such students often balk at the idea of having to write without stopping, claiming that "it doesn't give me time to think." Their problem, unfortunately, is that as soon as they do have "time to think," all they focus on is their feeling that they have nothing to say and can't write anyhow. When this happens I suggest that they just put words on paper (since free writing allows for that) or that they say whatever comes into their heads, even if it is "I feel stupid doing this and I have nothing to say." Once they know that they can literally write whatever occurs to them they often wind up writing a cohesive, less stilted statement, albeit interspersed with "I can't write anything and this is crazy." But at least this gives the student material to deal with and parenthetical statements can always be deleted later if that's what improves the work.

It is useful, once students begin to respond to each other's writing to question what they *did* like as much as what they did not. If students say they like another student's work—and they are more likely to say this than the opposite—it is especially difficult to deal with the reasons lying behind their declaration. It is important to push students to explore their assertions regarding writing and one way that I have found useful is the following. After a student has read, especially if I feel there is material in the writing that we might deal with, I might ask an open question to the class like, "How do you respond to what you've just heard?" They often answer that question with a safe statement such as, "I liked it; it was nice." At that point I try to pin them down, not necessarily to their reasons for liking it (a difficult task for most of us) but, rather, I want them to become more specific about the actual paper they've heard. I might then ask, "What part did you like best?" If the student replies, for example, "I liked the first sentence," I will ask the first student to read that sentence or paragraph again. (I should note that as the first student reads again I listen to whether he or she is reading with the same voice that was used initially. Often, the second time round the student will read with less conviction because he/she is embarrassed or possibly thinking of a "teacher trick" in which I will point out ultimately that the students who said they liked the paper are wrong. If I do hear the student read differently, I ask for another reading which will be exactly like the first. After several attempts the student usually recaptures the original voice in which he/she initially read the material.) I then continue by asking the second student what it was he/she liked in the first sentence.

If, at this point, I sense that the student critic has become frightened by this whole process—which he/she well might if her/his original responses were guesses—I present the problem to the rest of the class by asking them if they like it too. If most of them say they did I ask them how the writer could have ruined it. Rather than discussing the answer to that question, I ask them all to write down immediately a first sentence that says approximately the same thing but which says it terribly. I write such a sentence myself. Then we go around the circle as each person reads (in this case) an abominable opening sentence. I might try a second or third round, insisting that they make it even worse. By doing this, we can learn from examples what it is we do like and what we think is unsuccessful. In addition,

the writer receives support by the emphasis on the strong aspects of his/her writing. This procedure is, besides, something that many students have been convinced they know how to do—write awful prose—and which they delight in being ordered to do.

The most interesting project we worked on last term emerged from a brief exchange I had with one of the students, a Vietnam veteran. After reading to the class a particular piece he had written he asked me if I would "scope" it for him. I had no idea what he meant and after a confused exchange between the two of us he expressed his surprise that I had neither heard the term "scope," meaning "to look at," nor could I figure out what he had intended. Following that, the entire group began exchanging slang that perhaps others had not heard of. For instance, the ex-sailors and soldiers (mostly the older students) had special slang that they had used with each other, as did the blacks and whites in the class. After that, I suggested that we make individual lists. We compiled those lists into a lexicon of which I printed up copies for the next class. The words ranged from old slang like "hepcat" and "chow" to newer expressions like "herbs" (marijuana) and "to cop an attitude" (briefly, to patronize or assume a position of superiority with one's peers). Some students tried to figure out what the derivations of the words were and there was a long discussion of mother-related curses. I had made a point of including in my own original list slang that had never been part of my vocabulary but which, belonging to a generation preceding mine, I remembered from my childhood or had been familiarized with by watching old movies (especially 1940's "college musicals" which I knew my students would regard as square)—expressions like "platters," "cutting a rug," "neat," "swell," and "keen." These words on my list elicited some laughter, much of it at my own expense, and some serious discussion of language which began when some of the students admitted that they had refrained from listing certain slang because its use might have indicated that they were dated and "unhip." They pointed to words like "groovy" and "pot" as passé. Being experts on current slang, they felt free to make conclusions about this aspect of language and became interested in the idea of one's choice of language (in this case one's choice of slang expressions) as an indication of one's place in society. Some of them got into a separate discussion, trying to analyze what, in my speech and writing, was different from theirs.

Although I would have been willing to begin work on something else, the topic had raised such interest that we decided to see where it might take us. We agreed to write papers using as much of the slang in the lexicon as we could, agreeing on three paragraphs for each paper, each person only writing one paragraph in any one paper, then passing it on to someone else who would write the second paragraph and who would pass it to another person who would write the third and concluding paragraph. (During the writing of these papers another area was opened up. Some students, in agreeing or disagreeing with the content of the preceding paragraph got involved in dialogue with each other within the paper and were concerned about how they could make the paper cohesive and coherent and still say what they really believed. For some it was a good exercise in writing an argument, their being forced, within the paper, to acknowledge opposing viewpoints—although I never specifically mentioned that to them.)

After the papers were completed I had them typed, numbered, and printed. We decided on a new phase of the project—to translate (again, one paragraph per person) into what we termed "fancy-ass" English. That is, a type of English typified perhaps by euphemisms, overelaborate constructions and unnecessary polysyllabic words. (This definition was never stated in class but we intuitively knew the kind of English our term meant.) I offered to be a speller so that when students didn't know the spelling of words, they would call out and I would print the words on the board, leaving them there for the use of other students. At the same time, I was participating in the work of translation. One of the immediate reasons students enjoyed this process was because it allowed them to parody (through writing, I might add) what they considered the pretensions of many types of people—including English teachers and other people with more money and power than they had. While working, many of them borrowed words and phrases from each other; some of these were genuinely "fancy-ass" and pretentious, others were not. They also began searching for expressions, phrases, and constructions in a far more active way than I have observed them do in their "normal" revision of papers. For instance, they would ask me questions like, "What's a really uptight word for 'steal?' "—the original text having used the expression to "cop." In other words, they were making clear distinctions between slang, colloquialisms, "standard" English and, in this example, precise legal language.

After the translations were completed I again had them typed[6] and printed and we began the work of polishing a completd draft. We examined minutely each translation after the writers of the original and matching translated paragraphs had read them. We would ask the translator questions about the accuracy of the translation, referring to the original writer as to her or his intent; about phrases that had been purposely omitted or overlooked; and about the reasons for additional material. (We also made proofreading corrections.) We became involved in discussions about the feeling and meaning of words and phrases as we began to note that certain slang words do not have exact equivalents in standard or "fancy" English and that, often, in order to convey the exact meaning and connotation of a slang expression more words had to be added or, in some cases, the actual facts had to be changed. It became clear to us that some language is only appropriate for certain situations and that, in fact, in some cases slang may be the "proper" language to use, may even be the language of survival. (For example, one student, a veteran and an ex-convict, pointed out that the use of "proper" English in environments that he had been in could mean, quite literally, the difference between being accepted by a group or destroyed by it.)

We spent many weeks on this work and I would say that almost every person involved in it found the project exciting. (Students often asked if they could print up or type the material with me so that we would be sure to have it ready for the next class.) I should note that this activity had not been planned beforehand at all. It emerged out of what had been happening from day to day with a specific group of people and even when the first and the second weeks were completed I had no

[6]Whenever a student paper is typed it is duplicated exactly as the student wrote it, including eccentricities of penmanship such as seemingly arbitrary mixtures of upper and lower case letters.

idea what direction the project would take. I point this out because, as I look back at what I have related, a pre-planned lesson seems to be implied. Projects that stem directly from the interests and activities of a particular group of students involve far more students than do formulated exercises that we feel the students should be interested in.

Another example: One day I entered the class and was about to proceed with some revision work that we had been doing for a while. The entire class protested, saying they were bored with it. (In fact, so was I but I had neglected the fact that my boredom is usually a good indicator of theirs.) I asked them what we could do instead and they seemed only to come up with, as an alternative, "goofing off." I told them that I don't like to sit around and "rap" in a class, partly because I have too much nervous energy and because all of us do enough of it outside the class. Although there have been occasions when I have had "rap sessions" with classes—perhaps that kind of break is necessary—I often find such discussions tedious and unproductive. On that particular day I facetiously asked them whether they'd like to play a game. They responded in kind, saying they would and then, as the joke continued, when I tried to back out of the game, they held me to my word. As an attempt to foil them I suggested we play chess. (During a previous class a chance response to an analogy I had been making indicated that almost no one knew how to play the game.) This mutual teasing continued for a while until I turned to the three students who had said they knew how to play and asked them to teach the rest of the class.

The three immediately demurred, claiming that it would be impossible to teach the game without pieces or a board. I insisted that they could do it and the three of them reluctantly walked to the blackboard and began to draw a chessboard and pieces. The first day we worked on this was somewhat chaotic and I finally agreed with those who had said it was too difficult. The students unfamiliar with the game could not concentrate on the instructions and the drawing of moves and pieces was too cumbersome. The only reason the class did not fall apart entirely was, I think, due to the sympathy that the rest of the class felt for the three teachers who had been put on the spot. The next day I brought in a chess set and the original teachers continued to instruct the rest of the class. This project continued for about two weeks during which we periodically changed the teachers, some of the other students having become familiar with the game during that time. In addition, everybody was writing up instructions for playing, often being forced to accompany their work with minute drawings. (Obviously a situation that led us to consider the limitations of words.) This particular project did get some students to include more concrete detail in their writing, especially since, while they were compiling their instructions, I would sometimes walk around and pick up some of the rules they had written and attempt to follow them with the chess set. If there were difficult ambiguities or misinformation they could immediately see the physical implications of their writing and make adjustments.

I have mixed feelings about this chess project. I do not think it was as successful as the translation, in part because in translating, students could perform at their own pace. The chess project was difficult for those students who generally had

problems in maintaining interest or concentration and for those who became easily frightened by competitive games. When I selected different people to play against each other there was more attention paid but I felt that, for some of the students, losing or making foolish moves was perhaps too humiliating. Perhaps I might have limited the project to simply having the students try to describe how to set the pieces on the board and how to move each piece. On the other hand, many of the students were proud to have learned a game that they had always thought mysterious and difficult—a game that to many of them has become a symbol of the intellectual life and which they assumed would remain a mystery.

These two rather lengthy projects I have described were part of the work I did last semester only. In other classes we have worked on other problems. It may be that I will never use these particular activities again, although I do think that they gave many students who had virtually given up enthusiasm for writing or for education, the chance to begin again. It encouraged them to write and, more importantly, to enjoy writing and to enjoy thinking about working on challenging problems.

9. Joan Hartman *Writing Exercises*

When I started teaching English I, I quickly discovered how to invent writing exercises and then take the results and invent some more. The first three I describe came about this way. The theory behind them is apparent; it's possible to adapt them, and I have. But I describe them as they emerged from classroom situations.

1. Instead of beginning by writing about something we'd done lately, we briefly told each other about something we'd done lately to see if we'd had an experience in common that we could write about. Going to the dentist was what we settled on; we wrote and then read what we'd written to each other. Of course it turned out that we'd all written about going to the dentist from the patient's point of view, so I suggested we try it again, all of us beginning "Here I am, sitting in the dentist's chair." This time the students wrote much more particularly about going to the dentist, and when they read their accounts of what was going on, in their minds as well as outside, what they'd written was dramatically expressive as well. Then it occurred to me to try the same scene from the dentist's point of view, and so we began again, "Here's so-and-so, sitting in my chair." The students successfully imagined themselves into the minds of their various dentists and acted out those attitudes with equal dramatic expressiveness; many of them, remaining faithful to the externals of their first version of the scene, transformed it by their account of their dentist's different and sometimes opposed perception of it.

2. My directions: you're standing somewhere, looking at something. After we read what we'd written, I suggested we choose one paper and work on it. The students settled on the most interesting and the most complicated one by a student called John. He'd written about seeing for the first time the girl he now dated, a cheerleader called Patti, and seeing her during a basketball game when he was actually dribbling the ball down the court. As we asked him to be more specific about what he really saw, we discovered things he hadn't thought necessary to include or hadn't had time to: for example, a friend had previously offered to introduce him to Patti, so he was "half-looking" for her and able to pick her out

as he went by the cheerleaders. When we pressed him further about what he really saw when he looked at her, he produced an analogy—driving by a house—and developed it to explain the difference between seeing something as a collection of individual features and getting an impression of it as a whole. The rest of us then rewrote John's exercise from his point of view, beginning "There I was, dribbling the ball down the court." As we wrote, John answered our additional questions, and the questions he was asked showed the students trying for greater precision and coherence writing about his experience than they'd tried for in writing about their own. John took what we'd written home, read it—with Patti, he said—and returned it with brief comments.

3. On the fourteenth of February, writing about something suggested by the day, one student invented a brief domestic drama to account for the origin of Valentine's Day, though, he grumbled, he didn't have time to figure out a way to account for its name. In the next class I read the entry for Saint Valentine in *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* and then talked about etiological myths and just-so stories; I described some of Kipling's and read one of them. We then drew up a list of five items—fire, farming, the wheel, spaghetti, and the sandwich—and agreed that by the next class we'd each have invented a story to explain the origin of one of them. Again, when we wrote and chose one to work on together, the students chose the most ingenious, one that put the origin of spaghetti in China; a Chinaman tired of rice tried a newfangled ingredient called grain, and when he boiled it and it cooked into a doughy mass, he threw it disgustedly into an old wooden bowl with holes in it. We elaborated the story together, working out a cast of characters, acting it out, inventing dialogue, and getting the sequence of episodes and technical details right; we then gave the Chinaman a wife named Pa Get Chi and worked her into the story to explain how "aried grain strings" got their name. I acted as scribe, wrote up the first draft, and we polished it togther. The students then either rewrote their original stories or invented new ones; what they wrote was not as detailed or polished as our collective effort, but they all solved the technical problems of their just-so stories and used some devices to make them dramatic.

An occasion for just-so stories hasn't arisen since, and I haven't tried to force one. But I do create occasions for other kinds of stories. Three (or more) step sequences are useful: for example, 1) you're going somewhere—who are you, where are you going, and why? 2) something funny (or sad or nice or terrible) happens—what is it? and 3) then what? Or 1) you're going somewhere, 2) you have an impulse to do something you wouldn't ordinarily do, and 3) you do it—then what? Or 1) you're going somewhere with something in your hand, 2) something happens so that you no longer have it in your hand, and 3)then what? Or 1) it's ten o'clock at night and you're at home, 2) someone you've never seen before arrives and says ————, and 3) then what? I usually give directions for these stories a step at a time and we write after each step; sometimes we write all three steps of our own stories, and sometimes we pass them on so that each person writes one step of three different stories.

Sometimes we rewrite these stories—collectively, in small groups, or individually; frequently we don't. Rewriting, *professional* writers know, is the secret of good writing. But I don't think this holds for English I students: they need the experience of getting something pretty good down on paper right off, and as they become less inhibited by the activity of writing their initial results become richer and more satisfying. Their impulse to throw away what doesn't satisfy them I'm

coming to think is a legitimate one—provided they know they can generate something else to take its place without too much effort. It does them no good to labor over results they're unsatisfied with; when the results satisfy them, they're usually results that, in a regular composition class, would satisfy me after a little tinkering and correction.

Narrative elicits from my English I students their best writing: this is true whether they write about their own experience, actual or imagined, or someone else's, and true whether the mode they write in is realistic or fantastic. Their narratives are detailed and coherent; their particulars are perceived and organized logically and analytically. Their perception, however, is considerably in advance of their vocabulary: they don't name and aren't used to naming the perceptual and conceptual schemes they obviously use. And this creates problems when they're asked to organize their writing conceptually rather than narratively, as the following sequence of exercises shows.

1. I handed my students each a paper clip and asked them to imagine a person who'd never seen one. My directions: write this person a letter in which you describe what a paper clip is and how it's used. After reading what we'd written we found that for all of us words were a cumbersome way of conveying what a paper clip is; it would be more efficient, we concluded, to send a paper clip itself, clipped to a piece of paper.

   But what of something we can't send, I asked, like anger or happiness? My directions: write a letter to the class beginning "When I am angry" or "When I am happy." After reading what we'd written we found that we'd all done some of the same things, that there are a number of strategies for conveying our individual sense of abstractions like anger and happiness and that all of us had instinctively used some of them.

2. In the next class I appeared with an assortment of gadgets—things like a lemon zester, a nut chopper, a knife sharpener, a gimlet, a pipe tool; the students each had a gadget they'd never seen before. My directions: write a letter describing what's in your hand to someone you think can tell you what it is and how it's used. Initially baffled and reluctant to begin to write, they nevertheless began, and many of them, by describing what they could describe, developed a theory of the gadget's function by the time they finished that was either correct or plausible.

   I then tried to move them from a gadget that puzzled them to a more abstract problem that puzzled them. My directions, after a good deal of talk: write a letter to someone you think can clarify a problem for you, describing what the problem is and how much of it you understand. I suggested that—and then belabored the point that—as with the gadget, if they began writing about what they could understand instead of refusing to try because they didn't understand the problem fully, they might discover that they understood more of it than they thought they did. I could exhort them to try, but I could not hand them a problem as I had handed them a gadget; I could only describe the kind of problem I had in mind to write about and hope it would suggest analogous problems to them. It didn't; what I described was my experience of problems, not theirs, and they wrote very little.

3. In the next class I tried "handing" them the beginnings of a problem more complicated and abstract than a gadget, a short film directed by Roman Polanski called *Two Men and A Wardrobe*. In this film, which is without dialogue, two men and a large wardrobe appear from the sea; the men carry the wardrobe through a city (some unidentified and rather anonymous European one) and encounter adventures on the way, many low-keyed and some rather violent. At the end, themselves and the wardrobe all the worse for wear, they return to the

beach with it and take it back with them into the sea. My directions: write about the film. The students were able to write a lot about it—too much, in fact, because they reconstructed individual sequences without much sense of purpose and direction. Some of them, groping for a theory of function, also suggested conventional and rather grandiose schemes about evil in the hearts of men. But such schemes aren't *in* the film.

4. It of course occurred to me that Polanski's film was too "arty" and too fluid for the students to do much in the way of connecting particulars and abstractions in their writing about it, so at a later date I tried an exercise using material we'd generated ourselves in a class following the 1972 presidential elections, when we'd all written about how we felt when we knew Nixon had won. I took the responses of six students and paired them two to a sheet with the headings "Election Blues" for the two who'd voted for McGovern, bitter at the defeat of a man they admired and angry at Nixon; "Election Cheers" for the two who'd voted for Nixon, both joyless and one particularly moved by McGovern's concession speech; "We Didn't Vote, But . . ." for two foreign students who couldn't vote but whose responses to the candidates resembled the responses of those who did. My headings pointed to schemes that really were *in* the material and could have been profitably used to order a discussion of it. But the students didn't use them: they wrote less about the class response to the election than they'd written about the Polanski film, and what they wrote also lacked purpose and direction.

Thinking about the exercise, I realized that I'd selected and organized the material I gave them by concepts already present in my own mind as a result of what I'd read about the election, both before and after the votes were counted; reading what the class had written, I was struck by how typical" their responses were. And I'd more or less expected my headings to signify to the students what they signified to me. Perhaps, given more time, students with some notion of "typical" voter responses would have brought them to bear upon the material or found them in it; most students know that larger and more abstract schemes exist. But students who are good at figuring them out, who know how to use them and who understand that writing is a way of testing and validating them, are not the students who turn up in a remedial English course at a community college. The students I teach in English One are likely to guess at such schemes, in the hope that they will guess them right and so do well. At least I think this is one of the reasons they arrive in English One insecure and inarticulate, alienated from and mistrustful of their powers as language-users, thinkers, and writers.

At the end of a semester they are much more secure and much more articulate. Indeed, they are more satisfied with their progress than I am; having seen them go so far, I can't help but wonder if I couldn't have taken them farther, perhaps even through a composition course of a traditional sort. And then I decide not: they run on their timetables, not mine. In English I they discover skills they have always had and even acquire some new ones; they also produce heaps of prose, and usually produce it with more energy and pleasure than students I've drilled in the skills of analysis, abstraction, and conceptualization that are supposed to prepare them to write well in all their college courses. I don't expect my English I students to write well in all their college courses because I don't expect them to write well about anything until they have the kind of experience of it that puts them fully and firmly in possession of its content, its vocabulary, and its schemes.

But I do expect them to write better than they would have without English I. They are more confident of the value of what's in their minds, less likely to panic when they aren't sure what it is a teacher wants, and they are ready to learn more about writing. I've acquired more confidence in all my students as a

result of teaching English I, for I've seen how much better they can write when they are not alienated from their powers as language-users, thinkers, and writers. And insofar as I've learned not to perpetuate the style of teaching that alienates them, I've become more confident of my ability to teach.

10. David Doyle *What's in a Name?: Writing Each Other's Biography*

By considering specific student writing problems in conference rather than in class, and by using peer-tutors and professor-tutors at the Study Skills Center, my class sessions have been cleared for more sustained forms of writing activities. The name of the game here is involvement, and for this reason a writing project that goes on for at least several class periods is preferable to a series of shorter exercises among which there seems to be little or no apparent relationship. It is also desirable that one writing project point the way logically and inevitably to the next one, so that the people in the class are never in doubt as to the purpose of the exercise and the direction in which it is leading.

It is for these reasons that I want to describe a writing project that goes on for a number of class periods, that gets a high rating for generating student energy and involvement, and that leads so clearly and inevitably into considerations of organization, development, point of view, paragraphing, and language, that these foreign and formalistic terms need never be introduced to the class. They aren't necessary —except perhaps as descriptive labels to be applied later to processes that the students have already dealt with in their own terms.

The project consists of the people in the class interviewing each other and then writing personality profiles based on the information they have elicited. It works like this. All students prepare a list of twenty questions that they might ask a stranger (or some member of the class) in attempting to learn more about that person. Obviously, this project works best when it is undertaken early in the semester so that it really does provide a basis for the students finding out more about each other. It is important that the lists which the students prepare have at least twenty questions so that they are forced to go beyond the obvious ones of "What is your major?" and "Where do you live?" After working their way through the more superficial questions—"Do you have a car? A job? A girlfriend?"—the necessity of completing the list leads the students into more thoughtful areas—"Do you have any problems in getting along with your friends?" "Are you proud of yourself?" "Do you ever feel lonely?"

The next step is for each student to read aloud his or her list of questions, while the other people add to their own lists any questions they hear that they like. After the lists are completed, the interviewing is ready to begin. We were fortunate in having a visitor (a friend of one of the students) in our class the day we were to begin this part of the project and we asked him if he would be willing to be interviewed by the class. Because he was a stranger to the rest of us, the interview had total legitimacy from the very first question, "What is your name?" To emphasize that this was a group project, we followed the procedure of each student asking one question from his or her list (and following up with any pertinent questions suggested by the response). We went around the group like

this until all students had asked the questions they wanted to ask and felt satisfied that they had a pretty good picture of the person being interviewed.

Each member of the class is then expected to write a personality profile based on the results of the interview. This is where the project really begins to take off. As the students sit there confronting their raw data in the form of Q. and A. they realize that their problem is to bring some kind of order to it. But because the data has been gathered by themselves, and because the subject is so close to their own interests and preoccupations, they move into the writing stage so naturally and voluntarily that it need never be mentioned that they are using the same skills and techniques necessary to writing a term paper, a laboratory report, an examination essay. They organize their information, gather related material together, omit unimportant detail, emphasize major areas, develop a theme, draw a conclusion—all based on their own criteria, established by themselves, in putting the pieces of the jigsaw together. Some students are interested in recording *all* the information elicited, others choose only selected bits and pieces, but everyone (and I have done this project in two different classes) offers an interpretation of his or her data—surely one of the most important payoffs of the project. Students, it seems, may have difficulty in passing judgment on a book they have read or on an abstract idea, but no one has difficulty (because it is so much a part of everyday living) in formulating and expressing opinions about the people in his or her life.

All members of the class then read their profiles to the others, and considerations of organization, accuracy, fairness, and objectivity are organic to the ensuing discussion. The person who was interviewed also responds with his or her own reactions to the others' "reading" of him/her. I want to stress that the class analysis of the profiles is on a pretty sophisticated level. One student's paper contained the observation that the interviewee was interested in being a television repairman. He was challenged on this assertion by others, who said that all the interviewee had said on this subject was that he thought he "might like to work in the media someday—maybe television;" and that other responses he had made—he was "into music and art," he had written anti-war poems in high school, he was currently taking a college course in video-tape production—indicated that he was probably more interested in the creative aspects of television. The student who had written the remark admitted that he had "assumed" television repairman because he himself was heavily into mechanics and repairing all kinds of equipment and that was the first thing he had thought of.

Another student took as his departure point in writing his profile several responses that the interviewee had made which indicated that one of the reasons he had decided to come to Staten Island Community College was because there weren't any trees or grass in his native Brooklyn, and that he was heavily into using drugs and hard rock to "turn off" the environment he disliked so intensely. From these clues, the student developed an imaginative transformation of what the student's life might have been like had he grown up in Wisconsin rather than in Brooklyn. And this from a student who ordinarily seems comfortable only with literal "fact"—whose interest in class is usually engaged only when the discussion comes around to his area of expertise, baseball; whose lack of confidence in his

ability to express himself on paper is such that he chooses to write very little, if at all, and then masks his own sense of failure with a subtly defiant challenge to demonstrate to him why he should want to do otherwise.

After the class has worked as a group in interviewing one person and then compared the results, a model has been produced which the people in the class can use in interviewing each other. The next step, then, is for the class to pair off into groups of two, who interview and write profiles of each other. These interviews tend to be more personal than the group interview because of the intimacy established between the two people involved and because there is a sense of greater freedom in following through on a series of questions that lead in a particular direction. Also, of course, the student doing the interviewing feels more in charge than he/she had as a member of a group and this tends to contribute to his/her willingness to push the interview into deeper and more provocative areas. Also, the raw material the student produces is uniquely his or hers to fashion and the process of doing so, reinforced by his/her earlier success in the group interview, leads in most cases to an even livelier and more soundly constructed profile than the first time around.

This writing project, then, works on a number of different levels and leads towards several important goals of our program:

> (1) The project generates energy and involvement on the part of the people in the class, because they are relating directly to each other and not to "foreign" material imported merely for the sake of an exercise.
>
> (2) The students' sense of participating directly in the gathering of data gives them an important stake in ordering it into a coherent and persuasive piece of writing.
>
> (3) The project makes use of skills which the students already possess, and processes with which they are already familiar (there is no necessity to introduce the notion of a topic paragraph when every profile begins by introducing the person interviewed to the reader).
>
> (4) The material for analysis is the student's own work, and because of the high rate of achievement, the focus of the analysis is on what the student accomplished and the steps he or she took in getting there.
>
> (5) The student has become more conscious of processes that were automatically operative in the writing exercise itself and is therefore in a strengthened position to apply these processes to a variety of writing assignments he she inevitably will encounter in other classes.

But perhaps the most important consideration of all is that such a sustained piece of writing gives the students the experience of producing something that they can recognize as a solid and significant achievement. And they know that they possess the skills to move on to the next writing project. The next project always varies from class to class but it is invariably generated out of class discussions of the profiles. It might be the writing of autobiographies (which I approach through a step-by-step "component analysis," beginning from a stream-of-consciousness listing of personal experiences to the finished product). Or a class-written "Master Plan" for the college, based upon the students' own perceptions of changes they would like to bring about on campus, their analysis of the problems involved, and their proposal for solving these problems. It is only important that the project

have specific and immediate relevance to their own concerns. If it does, the gap between personal "subjective" writing and more formal "objective" writing is much more easily narrowed.

11. Stephan A. Khinoy *Against Remediation: The Change-Oriented Classroom*

I. Against Remediation

An Open Admissions program cannot be a remedial program.

The very word *remedial* implies an inappropriate model: a hospital model, a doctor-patient model. People come to doctors because they have distressing symptoms which they wish to be rid of. They are willing to make considerable sacrifices of comfort, time, and money to achieve their goal. They line up for access to expert personnel so that they can be diagnosed and treated. That is how a clinic or hospital works; and that is how a remedial program is meant to work: a *remedial* program dispenses *remedies*.

Of course, there are worse models for a college than that of the hospital. There is the boot camp model, which seeks to induce desired behavior by intensive collective drill, or the playground model, which espouses only those methods which are winsome and game-like. The hospital model for a college at least respects the intentions of some of the students in seeking out the college in the first place.

Furthermore, there are students for whom the hospital model is entirely appropriate: students who know their problems and are willing to work to overcome them. When I was in college, I roomed with a problem reader, a problem speller, and a guy with a study-skills problem. The first got a job as a publisher's reader and now writes books; the second is a lawyer and writes elegant briefs; the third runs a study skills center at a major university. Students of this kind exist, and have existed, everywhere. Their problems, and their cures, are the staples of remedial literature; *but these students succeed*. Sometimes, even when their problems are not diagnosed, they find ways to cope. They are not *our* problem students, but their own; and they leap at the chance of help.

But this is not what Open Admissions is all about. Many of our students do not perceive themselves as patients—people willing to pay a price to rid themselves of a disability which they recognize as such. They see themselves, rather, as prisoners. Far more Open Admissions students, it seems to me, are held back by not wanting, really, to read than by not being *able* to; by indifference to assigned material than by inability to summarize it adequately; by unwillingness to commit their thoughts extensively to paper than by lack of command of the written language. Theoretically, indeed, of their own free will, they have committed themselves to yet another educational institution, but nevertheless they regard what they think of as education, and all of its paraphernalia—teachers and their classrooms, books, TV sets, teaching machines—with incomprehension, hostility and mute distrust.

According to the hospital model, these students need something on the order of a personality transplant. The trouble is, they won't sign the release to let the school perform the operation.

This is the reality which has been so frustrating to me: I have felt, alternately,

angry at the students for failing to be what the remedial model specified, and angry at myself for so often failing to help them.

As I now see it, however, my task as a teacher of Open Admissions English is not primarily to "cure" students of "ailments"—not, that is, to remediate. Of course, I still do a lot of diagnostic work at the beginning of a term (and more as the term continues). When I get a clearcut "case" I send the student over to Bill Bernhardt in the Skills Center; *and* I assign that student a tutor; *and* I devise special exercises and redouble my personal efforts. Nevertheless, remediation as such is not my job so much as—it's hard to phrase this—inducing people to *turn themselves into students.*

Until this has happened, remediation is largely beside the point. Serious learning is largely self-generated among *students.* Where it is not taking place, it is because a critical mass of serious learners has not yet been formed. In an Open Admissions program, we must Openly Admit that our model is conversion—transformation—not remediation. What we are after is what education is about: the autonomous and responsible learner.

II. The Change-Oriented Classroom

Assume this with me: with many Open Admissions students, we must work toward change, toward conversion, rather than toward remediation, which implies the clinical model of treating the consciously afflicted. This implies a redefinition of goals and a reorientation of practice. As for the goals, I think of four—an arbitrary, but convenient, delineation. Two of them have to do with *eliciting* and *legitimizing*, in an academic setting, strengths which all students possess; two deal with freeing the student from dependence on the classroom and teacher for the achievement of academic goals, making him—making her—responsible and autonomous in their own terms. In practice, such goals can be reached, as far as I can see, only by a relentless, opportunistic eclecticism—a determination not to let a moment or a chance go by without pointing some student toward a chosen objective. My own practice, I hasten to admit, does not measure up to this standard; still, when I think about what happens to have worked for me, I think that I can discern some tendencies which it might be helpful to pass along.

1) The first goal, and perhaps the most frequently invoked, is to demonstrate to the student that his or her familiar and habitual skills are useful in an academic context. This means a constant readiness to try to elicit habitual abilities in the unfamiliar classroom context, and to point out, once they appear, that they *are* familiar to the student and that they have worked for him or for her in the new environment.

For example, *summarizing* might start with the teacher asking one student, during a topical discussion, what another student had just said. It can develop, with practice, into the written summary of a full debate. The same skill can be exercised on a Xeroxed newspaper feature which is being discussed in class and used for reading practice. *Description* might begin with a pile of photographs, perhaps, or the ads in *New York* or *Sports Illustrated.* "Describe the scene. Who's there

and what's happening?" *Interpretation*: "What can you tell about the man in this picture? What more do you know about him?" *Analysis*: "*How* do you know? How can you be sure?" (Let the students know the names of the skills they are displaying: it helps them to take themselves and the format of the class more seriously.) The range of skills that can be elicited from photographs is almost limitless: "You are one of the people in this picture! Write—quickly!—what you are thinking." And so on. Obviously, it is crucial for the instructor to seize the chances that come from the lesson itself. A student's timely or perceptive remark may lead the class in a completely unanticipated but valuable direction.

2) A second frequently invoked goal in a change-oriented (*not* remedial) classroom is to make the student responsible, in a constructive and non-threatening way, for what takes place in the learning process. In the summarizing example above, for instance, it frequently happens, especially in the early part of the semester, that a student will not have been listening to what his or her classmates have been saying. This is the chance to remind the class that they are responsible for what happens in the classroom, which means paying attention to each other. It may seem faintly Victorian, but I think that the earnestness appeals to at least some of the students. They enjoy being taken seriously.

The teacher can also further a sense of responsibility by breaking the class down into small groups, each charged with a task. One of the habitual skills possessed by almost every speaker of the language is the ability to organize an argument. If a debate arises, the class can be divided into groups according to positions on the issues. Each group is responsible for organizing and presenting its own position. The instructor circulates among the groups, making sure that there is careful discussion of what should come first, what has to be left out, what should be emphasized, and so on. Of course, he or she should take the opportunity to point out that these *are* skills and that the students are using them successfully. If the class seems sufficiently cohesive, the instructor can heighten the sense of group responsibility by having each group prepare one of its quieter members for the pivotal speaking role. Or again, when a class reads from newspapers, the goals of summarizing, close reading, and individual and group responsibility can be furthered by dividing the class into sections, each of which is responsible for preparing a summary of a different story. Another group then attempts to recreate the original story from the summary.

3) The third goal of the change-oriented classroom is to bring about the sense of *autonomy* which should arise organically from a sense of responsibility. The student must be encouraged to correct his or her mistakes and set his or her own goals. For example, the instructor might start with "free writing"as *speedwriting*. For the fun of it, this might be presented as an almost physical exercise in which the students are encouraged to write continuously at top speed until they can feel how tired their hands are and experience the difficulties of coordination that come from the hand trying to keep up with the mind. Then they should read over what they themselves have written and pick out what they like best. Frequently, if encouraged to show it and feel it, they are pleased and surprised at the quality of parts of their own work. Now is the time for them to begin to evolve the

"natural" organization for their idea. Is there more of it in what they have already written? Can it be extended? The structure of the essay takes shape from the imperative of their own thought. It may, of course, require restraint on the part of the instructor to avoid fitting the student's essay into some cut-and-dried essay form. But externally imposed organization is always a substitute for thought, while internally evolved organization may be its vehicle. As teachers, we have all read neatly outlined essays whose thought doesn't correspond to the roman numerals, whose transitions are bridges leading nowhere, whose every step in the direction of coherence is frustrated by external demands for an irrelevant pattern. In a change-oriented classroom, students must learn to discover and value their own patterns of thought—then they can be helped to clarify these patterns to others.

Always, whenever it's appropriate, *self-correction first*—certainly before the teacher makes his or her suggestions, and before anything else, if possible (frequently the rhythm of the class prevents it.) Let the students read their papers over—word by word, slowly, aloud or lip-reading (stress the *difference* between this activity and reading a book). Encourage the student to recognize small errors without embarrassment. Say—express—"The mistakes are normal when you're thinking so fast; what's good is the way you're finding them and correcting them." When the student has full confidence in his or her *own* ability to correct, he or she will be able and willing to extend it by calling on yours. Until then, it's largely a waste of time for you to intervene.

Autonomy also comes from a sense that what one is doing here is related to where one is going and where one has been—and that this is chosen. "It's morning, five years from now. You wake up and get out of bed. Where are you and what are you going to do next? What's your day like? What happened to you in the last five years to get you where you are? [shifting back in time]. What could you be doing now to get where you want to be? What could you be doing here, now? Would it work?"

And autonomy comes too from the sense of security which enables the student to take some controlled risks in class—and maybe, later, out of it. "Think of something that you believe in that you think no one else in the class believes in." This usually needs some explaining and typically it takes several tries before most people in the class can come up with something which most of their classmates don't already accept. When most people have latched on to their idea: "Defend it." Or, "Think of something which would be impossible to talk about in writing. O.K., now write about it."

4) All of these goals should tend toward their fulfillment: letting the student experience the deep joy which comes from real learning—the grace of an acquired skill, the challenge mastered, the new done well.

12. Peter Miller *Getting into the Purple Haze: Autobiography in Developmental English*

Introduction

I have been teaching English composition in urban community colleges for

seven years and developmental English for only a year and a half. When I started teaching in 1966, I was given an anthology of expository essays as a course reader, and a *Harbrace College Handbook*. With these, I inherited the pedagogy of Standard Written English, exemplified by the *New York Times* and all the best magazines. It was promulgated to the students by a four-page departmental manual of advice, requirements, and instructions handed out on the first day of class: "Good writing is like good manners. . . . All students will write six 500-word themes. The themes will be formal expository prose essays with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction will begin with a thesis statement (point of view), followed by the major reasons for holding that view. The body will . . . ." I remember drawing a large, equilateral triangle on the blackboard to represent the hierarchic structure of the theme, and thinking also that it was identical to the triangle drawn in my high school history class to represent the medieval world view. Could the Renaissance and the Reformation be far behind?

I ran immediately into problems trying to teach the formal expository prose essay. In class discussions about the Vietnam war, for example, or the Kerner Commission Report on urban riots, our conversations would be subjective and discursive, with combinations of thought and feeling developing simultaneously. The "themes," on the other hand, would largely be dry, cold, abstract, and abortive attempts at reproducing a theoretical model of didactic logic using cause-effect or stimulus-response patterns.

For the first three years of teaching I was bewildered and frustrated, only gradually understanding this situation which could be described as approaching pedagogic schizophrenia. Then I found myself asking students to keep journals in which they would describe moments or situations in their lives. I brought in short pieces of autobiography, selections from Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* or Piri Thomas' *Down These Mean Streets*, along with newspaper and magazine articles, to provide a variety of different foci in comparing the particulars of students' journals to the larger generalizations developed in the formal expository essays.

I have now been developing autobiography as a way to teach writing for three years. I have found that students differ significantly enough in their expectations, abilities, backgrounds, experience, and temperaments to create a rich context for themselves in the classroom and for each other as writers. For example, one developmental English class in 1972 included the following range of students: an ex-merchant marine, sometime alcoholic, night security guard; a foreign-born adolescent drug user; an assistant supervisor at a state school for the mentally retarded; a drummer in a performing rock band; an apprentice bakery chef; a seventeen-year-old girl who leaves the class for a week while her parents go to Chicago to help the children of an uncle who had shot himself and his wife; a woman returning to college after fifteen years; a Vietnam vet who literally had to scrape his buddy off the deck of a patrol boat. This context does not appear spontaneously, but emerges gradually over the first month of the term as a fertile ground for students to explore the use of words in talking and writing with the growth of their familiarity, trust, curiosity, and interest. It is not just a happy accident of a "good" class which, thanks to a few students, the teacher is lucky

to find, but something he or she should consciously develop and encourage the students to work for as well.

Listening and Writing Exercises

I get to class early and start a conversation with whoever is there while we are arranging the seats in a circle. The conversation can be as simple or complex as I choose, about a nice shirt, the weather, who's absent and why, an event in the life of the student or teacher, the college, the city or the country, depending also upon how narrow or broad I choose the focus of the conversation to be. As the rest of the students get seated, they start listening. These conversations, which can center around several subjects or just one, can vary from about five to fifteen minutes and can involve any number of students from two to about ten. What is important in this exercise is that the teacher be as conscious as possible about the choice of these variables: the length of time, the number of subjects and speakers, and the degree of focus. While the conversation has the appearance of being spontaneous, good conservations having, in fact, a life of their own, the teacher should be aware of how he or she is deliberately contributing to its shape, texture and direction in getting a full, accurate description or explanation of some issue or experience.

At any moment, I will stop the conversation, often several times, and ask the students to report on or comment on or write about what has been said. We then get into a discussion of exactly who said what to whom, using what words.

I have found that interrupting the conversation has several advantages. It allows the student to become aware that he/she is taking responsibility for his/her own words in a public conversation, and that other students are listening to the words he/she is using. The student is also seeing that he/she must listen correctly to other voices, using different words. Of course, one of the strongest impulses is not to listen at all, or to listen only in so far as other people's words are related to your own. Another strong impulse is to keep the conversation speeding along, not to go slow, follow closely, making sure of all the words, voices, feelings and thoughts of the conversation as it develops.

Students make several common mistakes in reporting a conversation. The reporter usually adds words to the conversation that were never there, leaves whole sections out, or drastically alters what is actually said. One value of the exercise is that it is immediately corrective and that the correcting is done by the students. Like anyone else, students don't appreciate being misunderstood or misquoted. What emerges from the exercise is, first, that the student sees and feels at once that his recollection is both selective and distorted. For whatever reasons, part of the conversation did not stick. Second, the student can begin to understand and feel the sensitivity and flexibility of language as it is being worked out openly in the class, first in the conversation, then in the writing and finally in talking about the writing. There is time to think things over, to re-think and re-feel, to add, subtract, alter, question, and come to a new conclusion (new words). Since we have all heard the same conversation, or the same writing, this turning over in the mind and choosing new words can be confirmed or re-questioned for

accuracy almost immediately.

It is also possible to start with a short, 15-minute writing exercise, either on a common subject or one picked by each student. This exercise is particularly useful in teaching what I would call focus and detail, and I will describe one briefly to illustrate what I have been talking about. In response to the assignment, "Describe a good time you had recently," a student wrote about going to a rock concert. In his short paragraph, all the sentences were "wrap-ups," blanket attempts to describe the whole concert, how he liked the light show and how he was "getting into the music." After he finished reading his paragraph, I asked the other students in the class to describe their picture of what the light show looked like and how the music sounded. We all gave him extraneous impressions, some of them quite funny, of what it was like for him, all of them being quite far from the actual facts. So that he could feel how far off we were, I deliberately prohibited him from telling the real story. As his frustration and amazement grew, he began to realize how little he had communicated, how little we actually "knew." After about ten minutes of this deliberate frustration, he burst forth with descriptions of the sights, the music, the crowd, the costumes and the actions of the performers. I restricted the focus to the music and repeated the process of asking the other students to give him their impressions. Again we were off the mark, but this time not quite so far. Then I narrowed the focus even further to include only two songs. He followed by giving us a virtual lecture on "hard rock," distinguishing it from "acid rock" and "glitter rock," and describing in musical terms what was happening in each song, what each instrument was doing in itself, how it was related to the other instruments and to the words of the song, how the two songs were related to each other and how they formed part of a sequence of songs which comprised the whole show. The final question I asked was, in effect, a rephrasing of the original one: "Why did you like the music?" He said that he had listened to it many times on record and knew the music "by heart," and that although it was "different" to hear it live in concert, he still "knew where he was all the time" in the music. He said he was "at home." Finally he said that he had never put all these feelings into words before, and felt "good," that he had "done something" in communicating and was "at home in the class."

The On-going Writing Exercise

This kind of writing exercise can last anywhere from one week to over a month. It is built around any situation in the student's life which is unresolved or incomplete, and there are dozens: "I'm afraid of an oral report in another subject;" "I can't find work after school;" "It's unfair that I help around the house more than my brothers;" "I need more money;" "I'm the youngest in the family (or the oldest) and I always take out the garbage or clean the bathroom."

At first the student describes the situation and the class asks a lot of questions to get as clear a picture as possible. What seems to keep the conversation alive is the slow unfolding of the problem, the actuality of the student's situation and

the temperaments of the characters involved. The basic feelings emerging from the problem, such as anger, fear, frustration, lead the student after a while to a specific charge. For example, what began as: "My father is a son-of-a-bitch," becomes altered after half an hour to: "My father ignores me and my brothers; he doesn't distribute justice or household jobs fairly." While the charge might not be the full extent of the student's feeling toward his father, it is concrete, specific and manageable. It is also something the student can write about, using plenty of examples. In clarifying the unresolved situation, the student and the class are using some of the same techniques required by other courses: ordering thoughts and feelings, focusing on a subject, and providing actual illustrations to support the subject.

Generally speaking, an agreement comes out of the discussion between the student and the rest of the class to do something about the unresolved situation: to talk with his father or with his brothers about a specific incident leading to a specific demand for a change. He has two or three days before the next class, and when he comes in, we all ask him what has happened. There is usually a partial attempt at resolution, and with it, a whole new set of thoughts and feelings about the situation. Even if he has done nothing, the student is feeling differently about the situation, with a sharper awareness of the problem and of his own frustration in not dealing with it. He finds that instead of being confused by an overwhelming amount of things to say, leading paradoxically to a blocked ability to write very much of anything, he has a lot to say about a small portion of the situation. He is also re-writing in a sense, by returning over several weeks to the same situation but with fresh material, using as much intuition, common sense, reason, and experience as he can bring to bear on a subject *he* chose, and which, in his thinking, talking, and writing, is making real demands on him to be concrete, accurate, full, open, and direct.

Conclusion

The particular examples I've given form part of an approach to writing through the use of autobiography. It is still a new approach for me, which will develop as I continue to use it. In describing some of the methods I have omitted a number of questions and problems. Why, for example, will a particular exercise work so well in one class and fall flat in another? How does one deal with particular students within a class whose responses are, in varying degrees, sullen, closed-mouthed, reluctant, recalcitrant, cold, bitter, or hostile?

While the methods are somewhat new, I do not consider my attitudes and feelings about writing to have shifted that much over seven years. I still value the clarity and accuracy of words; but I don't think that words are exclusively rational, literal, linear, or one-dimensional. I still value structure, but I don't consider structure solely as the "introduction-body-conclusion" of the formal expository prose essay. And I still value the fullness and richness of narration and exposition, not through the listing of reasons alone, but through the interplay of thought with feeling, intuition and experience.

13. SITA KAPADIA *Out of the rut, on the road*

The remedial English program at SICC has three features to it: 1) English I for native speakers; 2) English 001 for non-native speakers; 3) The Skills Center. I have been working in all three, giving equal time in each to speech, reading and writing. These three go hand in hand and are discussed here separately only for convenience.

1) *Speech.* As the remedial English students speak a work-a-day English, the English they hear in the Sociology, Government, Philosophy, or Nursing classes seems to them to be not only sophisticated and superior, but also difficult. They have to be shown that they already know the most difficult, the most basic things about the language: its sounds, sound patterns and a whole lot of things the sounds stand for. Should this store of words be increased and the units of rhythm become longer or more varied, they too would "speak like they're educated."

In the first few days of the semester there is a lot of speaking in class, but no monopoly of speech. It would seem we don't work on English, we just talk and get to know each other. A closer look would show this to be a covert attempt to break down the prejudice against English, possibly the most hated subject in high school because the most humiliating. I ask each student to speak on a given topic, suggested by a member of the class or myself. The topic, of course, has to be something they would talk about quite naturally with their friends or something that would in all likelihood arouse universal interest, such as safety in the streets; eternal damnation; the rich are civilized; portrait of an honest politician; automobile insurance for single teenagers; divorces.

A good introductory assignment is a friendly and flattering one in which students pretend to be journalists visiting the SICC campus. They draw up a list of questions they want to ask each other about the school. They interview me too. Straightaway, I get to know which are the bold ones, the lively ones, and the shy ones. They get to know each other too. All English 001 students benefit from this but foreign students do so more markedly. Asking questions correctly is a real need they feel. This interviewing helps build up their confidence tremendously.

Students love to bring their favorite things to class, talk about them, and answer questions at length. I enjoy having this bazaar; like the interviewing, it is very class-warming. (This is one way to get foreign students to talk at length.) I remember how an ornately elegant samovar brought to class by a Persian student got everyone interested. Kabir, the student, called it a tea pot and described the tea-making process in detail, getting increasingly articulate with every question of the many questions asked. Everyone present must also recall a beautifully carved water buffalo from the Philippines. One of the liveliest favorites was a picture of a boy's girl friend. After our little display, everybody wrote about one thing or the whole experience.

Another never-failing assignment has to do with description and analysis at an elementary level. Each student makes a statement in three parts: 1) naming a commercial product; 2) describing its appearance and saying what it is used for; 3) giving reasons for liking it. We had eulogies for Scope-in-the-morning mouth wash, Arrid underarm spray deodorant, Seamless panty hose, Wonder cloth, Tang,

Sunflower seeds from health food stores, and several other items equally exciting. The class was lively, friendly and vocal. In connection with sunflower seeds, I brought up the difference between natural and synthesized products. We got into a discussion about the eating habits of people around the world and the nutritive value of food eaten by Americans. I like to have a discussion of this kind develop from an assignment. It is spontaneous and ensures student interest. As at least one person feels strongly about the topic, others get drawn into it.

I consistently try to tap experiences that students might quite naturally want to put into words. Once I brought in a clipping of "Gazing at the Stars" and read it out very fast, too fast for anyone to register everything. I had an immediate unasked-for feedback; they wanted me to read Leo again, slowly. And "what was that last bit about Saggitarius?" Whether we believed in the stars or not, we decided we would watch ourselves for a day and report our findings to the others. Six out of twelve students were indifferent but four of them were able to verbalize the indifference. Dave Caranante observed that the whole thing was common sense stuff, written for the most part for the middle-aged housewife who doesn't really have to be told that she should plan her shopping, keep on good terms with the neighbors, visit a neglected friend, or take an interest in her appearance. Five students wrote about the influence of the piece on their own behavior. Peter, a Viet Nam veteran, said he kept buying state lottery tickets because he was told he was lucky in money matters that day. Mary Ellen had her hair done because a wonderful and lasting romance was going to begin for her. (The date was called off!) Jeff was helpful at home and received sweet, surprised looks from other members of the family. After all, he "didn't lose nothin'." Karen got her first theme done for her psychology course and decided to read the star column every day as it gave her that little push she needed. Most touching of all was Bill's confession of his mean ways with his girl. Now he had changed because of the star gazer's warning against selfishness. The twelfth member of the group, Marilyn, who knew about stars, numerology, and that whole elusive bag, wrote about something that intrigued her; she claimed she knew my zodiac sign. She made an interesting analysis in which I turned out to be a humanitarian Aquarian and she happened to be right! The others swarmed around her with questions and such a bedlam followed that the class hour was soon aborted. It didn't matter; I think we had used language with interest, to a purpose.

Talking of vocabulary, we discovered that the number of different words people used in speech was far less than the number of words they understood. Students were very self-abusive, attributing their limitation in language to laziness. So we started our "Stop Being Lazy" game. Each one of us tried to speak about something with as much precision of language as possible. When everyone said "you know . . .," we said in a chorus, "but we don't know!" If anyone said that a movie was "fantastic," a game "cool," or a political speech "neat," we were not satisfied. We nagged each other to exactness. We probed responses, expanded ideas, looked for interest. Once we had said it all, we found we could write it too. I must hasten to add here that we found we had enough pertinent matter to write about. The writing itself, however, has always been inferior to speech in remedial classes.

One way of bridging the gap between speech and writing may be this: Students form groups of three. Two of them engage in conversation while the third one rapidly writes down all that is said. The three then edit the writing. This plan requires alertness and application. Students like it.

2) *Reading.* We read a lot. I read and have students read articles from student newsletters, poems and stories. This requires a deal of strategy, for they say they don't care to read anything. But they read all the same and after a couple of turns, they do it willingly. The reading is introduced at a point when interest is likely to be optimal. Once I breezed in saying that I believed the world to be a beautiful place with everything perfect. Of course, there was much opposition, talk of living in fear, ugly wars, high prices, unemployment. Then we read Ferlinghetti's "*The World is a Beautiful Place.*" They began to understand irony and sarcasm and the power of language.

I try to add peripheral interest to what we read with the help of records and films. After talking about the reasons why some famous or important people have committed suicide, we read *Richard Cory* and then played Simon and Garfunkel's record which has variations on the theme but the same title. After talking about American Indians, we read "*Now That the Buffalo Are Gone*" and followed it up with a film having the same title. This kind of activity has a richness about it, an antidote to boredom. They begin to see that words on paper can be as interesting as other media.

I have found that reading in a peer group can be liberating, once the members of that group know they are with friends, that their purpose is learning and the mode happy. Sitting in an informal circle, we perform our daily devotion of reading aloud one by one. Play reading is particularly enjoyable and beneficial. To introduce students to it is to introduce them to reading not laboriously, but happily. The story makes it fun. The story is easier to follow through dramatic speech than through heavy narrative. But, above all, in play reading they are able more easily to give to their reading the rhythms of speech. And gradually they learn to do this in all their reading. Progress varies with individuals. Some are so shy, so diffident and self-abusive that they always ask for a small part, which means less practice. Even then, the overall progress in this area has been quite satisfactory with native as well as non-native speakers.

From my experience I know that many interesting, vigorous discussions and subsequent written work might well develop from the reading of these plays. I used *Ten Short Plays* published by Dell and edited by Jerry M. Weiss. In my classes we talked about boredom and its causes, psychoanalysis, tradition, society and the criminal, space, and the future. All these would have been impossible, almost unthinkable topics for a remedial English class. But the plays gave us specifics to talk about, specifics that triggered fine thinking-speaking-learning experiences. We read the plays, talked, and wrote our thoughts as we normally do after discussions. There was no formulated topic but the topic discussed became a springboard from which we were able to dive into free writing, as we chose, insensibly drawing upon the energy of words and ideas just experienced.

3) *Writing.* Everybody writes everyday. Or is supposed to. I have experimented

with allowing writing time at the beginning of the class hour as well as at the end. Generally the latter yields superior output, as it follows a fairly rich verbal experience in the classroom.

Our topics are as often spontaneous as preplanned. And "free writing" is always a student's perogative. Something that students have been talking about before class begins can well become our area of interest. Sometimes students write in response to a set of statements on a single topic, such as Marriage:

1. Marriage is, like life in this—that it is a field of battle and not a bed of roses. *Robert Louis Stevenson*
2. Men . . . are always wooing goddesses and marrying mere mortals. *Washington Irving*
3. Marriage, if one will face the truth, is an evil, but a necessary evil. *Menander*
4. Love is the star men look up to as they walk along, and marriage is the coal-hole they fall into. *Anonymous*
5. Marriages are made in heaven. *Alfred Lord Tennyson*

The awareness of available choices in language can become fascinating if students are asked to edit their own work, or to edit peer writings. I try to heighten this awareness and do exercises in multiple choice statements, such as:
Do the following sentences mean the same thing? If they do, what is your choice at *this* point?

1. Jack knew Mr. Calvin was a good teacher, so he went to him for help.
2. Jack went to Mr. Calvin for help because he knew him to be a good teacher.
3. Knowing Mr. Calvin to be a good teacher, Jack went to him for help.

Many students chose the last pattern because they had never used it before, because it had seemed hard to comprehend till now, and because now they felt confident about using it. It is not always possible to push language or logic to satisfactory points but this awareness-of-choice activity is usually a fruitful one, making students see that they already have more word power and, therefore, more potential writing ability than they had ever dared to hope for.

One of the things I like to do that I haven't mentioned before, is to show silent films. The Chaplin films are easy to follow but there are others like "Two Men and a Wardrobe" and "The Hand" which not only awaken observation but stimulate discussion. Students have often asked to see these films again so that they may observe more keenly and find the right words for what they saw. Discussions that follow are rich in ideas. From among films with dialogue, I find those with simple, forceful dialogue and description to be most useful, e.g., "Of Mice and Men."

During the film I sometimes jot down sentences that eventually become familiar patterns in student writings:

1. If you get into trouble, hide in the brush by the river until I come.
2. He will not drop it until I tell him, unless the dinner bell rings.

Since students have heard these sentences in situations they understand they learn the patterns easily, without my becoming an odious grammarian. If "free writing" follows it is less heartbreaking than it could be. In fact, I've seen good things happen. The "free writing" that followed "Of Mice and Men" included reflections

on loneliness, putting a pet to sleep, old age, big gentle men, possessiveness, and a dream life in Honduras.

Not all class hours have been happy. After all, success and failure being relative matters, you might think my successes to be petty things. For me, one thing is clear: it has been good to remember Rabindranath Tagore's belief, "All that is, is born of joy."

ELIZABETH WOOTEN

Graduate Departments and Community College English Teachers

People fall in love with different aspects of a single truth . . .

Herman Wouk

WHEN I FIRST HEARD Bette Midler sing, the most prestigious place she had ever appeared was the Continental Baths on W. 74th Street. Friends only barely tolerated my rave reviews and insistent suggestions that she would become a major star. So when, during the same week last December, the Divine Miss M appeared both in sold-out performances at the Palace and on the cover of *Newsweek*, I merely smiled.

Those community college leaders who for many years have crusaded for reform in graduate education based on the realities of life in two-year colleges must feel a similar sense of satisfaction when they read the recently published report of the Panel on Alternate Approaches to Graduate Education, *Scholarship for Society*.[1] Although the criticisms of graduate education have often been uneven, oversimplified, perhaps more hostile than constructive, teachers in community colleges have had opportunity to know sooner than most the inadequacies of their graduate training and can argue from an indisputable position of authority—their collective personal experience. It must be gratifying now to hear their arguments echoed in the words of a major document written by a blue-ribbon commission of scholars, graduate deans, and other university administrators under the auspices of the Council of Graduate Schools and the Graduate Record Examinations Board.[2]

[1]*Scholarship for Society*, the report of the Panel on Alternate Approaches to Graduate Education, may be ordered from Panel Report, GRE Board, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, at the price of $2.00 per copy.

For additional discussion of this report, see the following:

"Reforming Graduate Education," Benjamin DeMott, *Change*, February 1974, pp. 25-29.

The Chronicle of Higher Education, December 3, 1973, Volume VIII, Number 11, p. 1.

ADE Bulletin, Number 41, May 1974.

[2]The fact that no representative from a community or junior college sat on this panel

Elizabeth Wooten, who holds a Ph. D. in Eighteenth Century Literature, worked for six years as a teacher and head of the Humanities Division at Cleveland State Community College, Cleveland, Tennessee, before becoming Director of English Programs for the Modern Language Association in New York.

Reverberations of past recommendations from community college leaders can be heard in such statements as these, found in the Panel's report:

> If Everyman is to profit from personal inquiry . . . new arts of teaching will be necessary.
>
> . . . the period of graduate study often resembles a chamber of alienation.
>
> . . . certain academic self-images of a half-century ago are obstacles to new breakthroughs in American experiments in mass higher education.
>
> Years of study must not be years of isolation.
>
> . . . much graduate education is needlessly overcommitted to structures and attitudinal "fixes" that intensify feelings of disengagement, of remoteness from community, and of chilling disbelief in the social uses of knowledge and imagination.
>
> . . . the notion of study as an interminable staging area, a postponement of "real life," is unacceptable.
>
> . . . it is both essential and possible for pedagogical issues to figure more openly in the world of graduate study.
>
> There is a particular need for research in the teaching/learning process and the proper use of emerging technological aids for instruction.

The report contains twenty-six specific recommendations for the reform of graduate education. Although these recommendations are directed toward no particular graduate program, many of them, if implemented, will have extremely favorable implications for the training of community college English teachers. If, for instance, the group's first recommendation were to become policy, each graduate institution and program would define its particular mission so as to reflect "awareness of existing departmental strengths and weaknesses, and of the goals and functions of neighboring institutions of advanced education" (p. 34). This would mean that not all schools would feel compelled to be carbon copies of research universities but, instead, would establish their own "significant identity related to their major resources" (p. 34). This identity would be respected no matter how little it resembled traditional forms of the past.

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makes their findings that much more encouraging.

Panel members were: Daniel Alpert, Director, Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois; Warren G. Bennis, President, University of Cincinnati; Albert Berrian, Associate Commissioner for Higher Education, New York State Education Department; Edward E. Booher, President, Books and Education Services Group, McGraw-Hill, Inc.; Jean W. Campbell, Director, Center for Continuing Education of Women, University of Michigan; Benjamin DeMott, Professor of English, Amherst College; May Diaz, Professor of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley; Patricia Albjerg Graham, Professor of History and Education, Barnard College and Teachers College, Columbia University; Bruce Hamilton, Executive Secretary, Educational Testing Service; Cyril Houle, Professor of Education, University of Chicago; Robert Kruh, Dean of the Graduate School, Kansas State University; Edward Lear, Dean of the School of Engineering, University of Alabama; Lincoln Moses, Dean of the Graduate Division, Stanford University; Boyd Page, President, Council of Graduate Schools in the United States; Rochus Vogt, Professor of Physics, California Institute of Technology; Albert Whiting, President, North Carolina Central University.

This individualization of mission, however, cannot work, the Panel maintains, so long as there exists "the practice of referring all contemporary educational enterprise to a single traditional norm . . . [an imitation] of institutions founded in the world of kings and mass illiteracy . . ." (p. 22). Finding it unfortunate that the same yardstick employed to rate graduate departments in 1974 is "precisely . . . that which would have been acceptable in 1920" (p. 22), the Panel proposes a new system for rating graduate departments. "Support should be sought for the creation of a commission to develop alternative standards of evaluation for graduate institutions not totally oriented to the standard of research eminence, and to apply these standards in assessing those institutions that want program evaluation" (p. 34).

If such an accrediting system were begun, certain graduate departments in various parts of the United States, finding their faculty interest and abilities particularly suited to training teachers for non-traditional forms of education, could, without penalty of loss of prestige, become national centers for such programs. When the ratings for graduate schools do cease to be predicated upon one criterion of excellence—research orientation—the invention and creativity which have been stifled by such judgment will be used to plan the variety of graduate programs which are demanded by a diverse and democratic society.

The shape of a graduate department, however, will not be determined by a printed statement of mission but by the priorities of its individual faculty. At the present time, tradition, rather than personal preference, determines those priorities: the principal, and often only, scale for evaluation of professional competence is publication. Finding this situation deplorable, the Panel writes: "By announcing that only one kind of distinction is possible for academic man or woman, the publication system insinuates that any inclination to move in different directions is a certain badge of the second-rate" (p. 42), and recommends that decisions for tenure, promotion, and salary no longer be based "on the single criterion of research and publication but reflect a scrupulous and critical survey of the quality of performance in these other legitimate forms of intellectual enterprise." Many professors who now must protect themselves by pursuing activities in which they are not especially interested will, if not forced to "publish or perish," direct their energies toward their genuine concerns, which will often include matters of instruction and curriculum, areas which will directly benefit community colleges.

A major criticism which community college teachers make of their graduate training is the lack of realism and responsiveness in curriculum requirements. This criticism finds support in the Panel's suggestion that curriculum content and emphasis be continually re-examined and that persons outside the graduate department but affected by it be involved in this scrutiny:

> Discipline-based seminars on essential subject matter should be conducted every 3 to 5 years to examine prevailing methodologies of teaching, to probe neglected areas of social reference and the border points of the discipline as they are presently understood. In addition to graduate faculty and students, participants in the seminar should include experts from outside the university, prospective employers of degree candidates within the program of study, and selected members of the technical panels for the discipline. (p. 47)

In addition to these seminars, which would review and re-evaluate the content of the discipline's subject matter, a special ongoing panel of "successful, non-university-based doers in fields allied to the disciplines . . . should meet regularly with the instructional staff for the purpose of providing suggestions concerning curricula, evaluative criteria—all matters related to advanced training" (p. 38).

Lack of communication between community college teachers and graduate departments, as represented by the need for such proposals as these, has resulted in serious problems: new training programs which still do not meet the needs of community college teachers, misconceptions about the nature of teaching and the characteristics of students on community college campuses, wrongly placed emphases and questioned motives. The creation of such seminars on subject matter combined with consultative panels on curriculum and methodology would establish a climate where such misunderstandings would not so readily occur.

If the community college teaching profession has been plagued by any one result of graduate education as it now stands, it has probably been the number of new degree holders who apply for faculty positions with no awareness of the demands, challenges, and opportunities in community college teaching. The new Ph.D. whose letter of application for a position as instructor in composition outlines an emphasis in Renaissance poetry with outside interests in heroic drama and Swiftian satire is so common as to be no longer amusing, only sad. Such mismatches of expectation and reality can be avoided if, in the terms of the report, "'in-touchness' is the norm for students" (p. 29). The Panel, therefore, specifically recommends that "in every discipline . . . graduate training should include, for all candidates who do not already possess such experience, a deliberate and significant component of discipline-related work outside the university walls" (p. 40). Such work experience, taking the form for potential community college teachers of an internship on campus, would spare new instructors much anguish and community college students untold suffering.

The appearance of such recommendations for graduate school reform, made by the university community itself, augurs well. The time is right for even, temperate communication between community college teachers and graduate professors. *Scholarship for Society*, with its balance, its absence of polar positions, can provide a meeting place for this serious, cooperative discussion. And if community college leaders, studying the recommendations, do not go as far as Colley Cibber who, upon reading the manuscript of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, felt such ecstasy that he fell into a rhapsodic trance and saw a vision of heaven, they should at least experience great happiness in learning that the push for graduate education reform is not theirs alone.

GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

The development of these guidelines was authorized by the CCCC Executive Committee in April, 1970. The first draft was prepared during a three-day conference in St. Louis in September, 1970, attended by Gregory Cowan, Midwest, Elizabeth Martin, Southwest, Lionel Sharp, Northeast, Stan Spicer, Pacific Northwest, and Richard Williamson, Pacific Coast, all elected regional representatives to the National Junior College Committee; Edward P. J. Corbett, incoming chairman of CCCC; Robert Hogan and Nancy Prichard, National Council of Teachers of English; and Richard Worthen and Elisabeth McPherson. This first draft was distributed to the CCCC Executive Committee in Atlanta, in November, 1970, and many of the members of that committee both commented on it and handed it to colleagues who also sent comments.

Immediately following the NCTE Convention in Atlanta, a second meeting was held, attended by Evelyn Barbig, Gregory Cowan, William Doster, Raymond Fredman, James Hill, Richard Larson, Elisabeth McPherson, Leo Neifer, Audrey Roth, Lionel Sharp, Kenneth Symes, and Samuel Weingarten. The second draft resulted from the discussion at that meeting, as well as from suggestions submitted by both university and junior college teachers from many parts of the country.

The final draft was "endorsed with enthusiasm" by the Executive Committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Cincinnati on March 24, 1971. The Executive Committee requested that the Guidelines be published, and that a committee be appointed to make recommendations on how they can be implemented.

Gregory Cowan, Guidelines Committee Chairman

I. INTRODUCTION

Increasing numbers of universities are designing special graduate programs to train junior college English teachers, and upon the success of these programs depends, to a large measure, the success of junior college English departments in the future. Such programs, if they are to serve the junior colleges well, must be based on a recognition that the teaching of English in junior colleges, although similar in some ways to teaching English in the first two years at senior colleges, is different in some important ways. Junior college English teachers are called upon to fill new roles; they must go outside the traditional methods of teaching composition and literature in order to make literature accessible, and effective writing possible, for a much wider spectrum of the population than has ever before attended college. If junior college teachers are to succeed in their undertaking, they must recognize and adapt to social changes; they must become familiar with changes in related disciplines and apply those changes where they are relevant to English; and they must be willing to initiate and adopt changes in their own discipline.

Whatever training prospective junior college English teachers are given, it must produce teachers willing to take a strong posture against conventional approaches adopted merely because they are conventional, against false and irrelevant standards followed merely because such standards have traditionally prevailed. The training programs must produce instructors determined to teach for the good of the students rather than the expectations of the universities, to focus on creating actual change in their students rather than emphasizing grade points and degrees. And in spite of the teacher's obligation to develop and adapt his teaching to the expressed needs of his students and the desires of his community, genuine education is unlikely to occur unless the teacher can keep a balance between what he thinks the student needs, what the student thinks he needs, and what the community thinks the student needs.

The competencies urged in these guide-

lines may seem intended to create paragons rather than train human beings. Nevertheless, a good junior college English teacher will possess many of the attitudes and skills necessary to do much of what is listed here; a better teacher will be able to do most of it; and the best teachers can not only do all of it, but they can do it comfortably, expertly, and enthusiastically. Many of these skills and attitudes, of course, are not peculiar to the needs of junior college English teaching. Training programs geared to produce teachers with the abilities called for here might well lead the way to improved training programs for teachers at all levels, from kindergarten through graduate school.

These guidelines are intended to serve as a checklist against which the suitability and value of training programs, both existing and proposed, can be measured. The guidelines are addressed to the universities which are developing such programs, to the students who plan to enroll in them, and to the junior college English departments which may employ the graduates of the programs.*

Need for Programs

The guidelines recommended here are based, in large part, on what junior college English teachers have been saying for nearly a decade. In 1965 a three-day national conference on the Teaching of English in the Junior College resulted in *Research and the Development of English Programs in the Junior College*, edited by Jerome W. Archer and Wilfred A. Ferrell, NCTE, 1965, perhaps better known as "The Tempe Report." Its recommendations for the training of junior college English teachers, found on pages 118-121, are forthright and clear. In the same year, *English in the Two-Year College*, by Samuel Weingarten and Frederick P. Kroeger, NCTE, 1965, reported the results of a study made in cooperation with 479 English teachers in 239 two-year colleges. What this study concluded about teachers' professional qualifications and the unique problems of teaching English in junior colleges emphasized even further that new programs and further research were needed.

More recently *The Focus Report on the National Study of English in the Junior College*, by Richard J. Worthen and Michael F. Shugrue, published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on the Teaching of English in Higher Education, 1969, reports the results of nearly 3,000 completed questionnaires from 263 junior colleges. Asked to select five things most needed to improve instruction, at least 25% of the teachers responding checked the following items:

Item	*Percentage of responses listing item among five most needed*
Techniques in teaching composition	71
Variety in teaching techniques	46
Defining and measuring relevant course objectives	43
Breadth in related academic subjects such as history, sociology, political science, philosophy	41
Knowledge of how to teach reading as a basic skill (as contrasted to teaching critical reading or understanding literature)	37
Characteristics of junior college students	31
Psychology of interpersonal relations	28
Knowledge of psychological learning theory	26
Courses in literature	25
Curriculum development and articulation	25

*At the same Executive Committee meeting which endorsed these guidelines, the Chairman of CCCC was authorized to appoint a committee to recommend specific steps for implementing such evaluations and for publicizing the outcomes.

As the report goes on to point out, "Even a casual study of these responses indicates the great importance which junior college English teachers place upon learning more about the teaching of composition. Granted that some especially skillful teachers are able to make their own transitions from graduate school literature-criticism courses to their own composition and reading classes in the junior college, nonetheless many other teachers, as evidenced by their responses in the questionnaires, find considerable difficulty in doing so. The conclusion seems inescapable that in junior colleges, where writing and reading courses can outnumber literature courses by as much as forty to one, most teachers believe their preparation has been inadequate."

Worthen and Shugrue conclude (page 13) that "Graduate departments of English, as part of their commitment to excellence in teaching, must initiate and support substantive and flexible programs which will prepare qualified two-year college English instructors."

That the traditional MA does not work very well for junior college English teachers is hardly surprising, since it was not designed to do so; as a step toward the traditional Ph.D. it works admirably. But the scholars who designed the traditional MA did not plan it as a union card for people faced with bringing "modern literacy" to large numbers of students who, a generation ago, might never have attended high school. The traditional MA was not intended for teachers facing students whose learning styles deviate markedly from middle-class conceptions; whose increased dependence on radio, television, and film, rather than on print, for information and self-image demands a new kind of teaching approach; who must achieve some fluency before they can achieve discipline; and who need continued help in reading.

Necessary Competencies

These guidelines recognize that great and desirable diversity exists among two-year colleges. Nevertheless, the guidelines try to consider, as specifically as possible, what the task of most junior college English teachers is, and what knowledge and skills are necessary for the performance of that task. Even though many of these needs are shared with teachers at all levels of education, the attitudes and abilities are important enough to need emphasizing here.

Successful junior college teachers should be able to:

1. recognize and respect the wide range of backgrounds, abilities, interests, and career goals of junior college students;

2. understand and empathize with the diverse value systems of the students they teach;

3. understand the nature of language and be aware of the ways in which all human beings use language to order their vision of themselves and the world, to manipulate others and allow themselves to be manipulated;

4. recognize that all levels of language and all dialects are equally valuable and that academic insistence on a so-called "standard" English for all situations is an unrealistic political and social shibboleth based on unsound linguistic information;

5. emphasize the humane values of whatever material they use in the classroom and relate those values to the student and the student's values, giving only secondary emphasis to the historical and cultural context or the critical attitudes that have been taken toward it;

6. realize that the primary obligation of junior college English departments is, and will probably remain, the teaching of communication;

7. understand the relationship among the various communication skills—reading, writing, speaking—as well as be aware of the necessary differences among them;

8. recognize the continual need for teaching reading in all their courses, whatever their title, and be aware that the kind of reading help they may give will range from the literal transcription of phonetic symbols, through simple comprehension, to critical appreciation;

9. recognize that, since the skills and past achievements of their students will vary widely, their task in teaching writing is to help as many students as possible achieve success rather than to establish certain cut-off points below which a student will fail—to strive for a high percentage of success

rather than guarantee a certain percentage of failure;

10. present significant abstract ideas and concepts, without distortion or over-simplification, so that they will be accessible to a diverse student group;

11. to stimulate their students' exploration of both new and traditional forms of communication, invent and use techniques of learning appropriate to the form being taught;

12. make assignments and develop course goals cooperatively with students in such a way that all students will know what is expected of them and on what criteria they will be judged;

13. recognize that effective evaluation can take various forms, and therefore devise and use methods in which there is a clear fit between the substance and instruments of evaluation, on the one hand, and the purposes, goals, and content of the course on the other;

14. comment on student papers in such a way that the comments indicate receptivity to what the student has produced, acknowledge that any honest communication is worthy of respect, and help the student write more successfully next time;

15. understand enough about interpersonal relations and group dynamics to be able to stimulate effective informal discussions;

16. organize and encourage small self-directed groups working together within each class;

17. organize and teach introductory courses in American, English, world, or contemporary literature, or in literary types and genres, or literature thematically organized, all in such a way that emphasis is placed on the connections between the literature and the students' own experiences;

18. put together and teach a fair, representative course in minority literature;

19. supplement, by works from minority literatures, courses in American and world literature that would otherwise be slanted, unrepresentative, and incomplete;

20. develop and teach whatever other English courses are required to meet the specific needs of the students and the community;

21. understand how to work within the academic system in order to change the system, recognizing that worthwhile developments result not from irresponsible aimlessness but from a process of mutual development undertaken cooperatively with students and colleagues.

II. PROVIDING THE COMPETENCIES

Rather than dictating lists of courses or specifying numbers of graduate hours that should be part of a junior college training program, these guidelines suggest desirable competencies. The competencies may be acquired through outside experiences unconnected with the academic world, through undergraduate study, or through courses taken by the candidate while he is registered in the program.

The purpose of these guidelines is to set forth as clearly as possible what these competencies should be and to indicate the knowledge and skill that make a candidate well-grounded in his discipline, effective in a junior college classroom, and attractive to a junior college hiring committee. Although it is doubtful that any desirable candidate would require work in all areas, training programs should be designed to develop in a candidate whatever competencies he is in need of.

To insure that the candidate will be well-grounded in English, programs should be designed to establish professional competence in three areas of equally significant and complementary study: linguistics, literature, and rhetoric. To insure that he will be effective in his own classroom, the programs must establish the candidate's skill in the teaching of writing, reading, and speaking. The program must establish the candidate's ability to evaluate student work fairly and helpfully, and it should offer him at least a working knowledge of several related disciplines. Provided the candidate achieves these competencies, the method of achievement is relatively unimportant. These guidelines are intended to encourage a variety of approaches.

Linguistics

The term "linguistics" as it is used here includes the history of the language, dialectology, and some understanding of the concepts that underlie various grammatical

systems; it also includes some study of the interrelationships between different language families, between speaking and writing, and between language and other modes of symbolic expression. These guidelines do not propose that candidates memorize grammatical patterns or become experts in any grammatical system, nor is it assumed that junior college English teachers will ask their own students to master either phonemic analysis or deep structure diagrams.

The candidate should understand, however, that historically, "standard English" is a term that refers to the fact that Southern or South Midland English attained primacy over the other official (regional) dialects in the 14th and 15th centuries. There is no such comparable dialect in American. There are certain chiefly phonological and morphological items in American that are very widespread; there are others that are associated with various localities, cultures, or classes, and the choice between one item or another is a matter of sociology and etiquette, not of grammar or linguistics.

The insistence that candidates understand something about the nature of language and the ways in which various grammars attempt to describe language rests on the assumption that, since language is the most important of several human symbol systems, a general understanding of what it is and how it operates is essential to anyone undertaking to teach its use. Without this knowledge, a junior college teacher will be unable to disabuse his students of false notions about absolute correctness; without it, he may fail to realize that every student has a right to his own language, a right not to be forced by his instructor to adopt another dialect of that language in order to succeed in school. Without it, he may fail to understand that, although it is valuable for students to practice writing in various styles, no single style or level of usage is appropriate to all occasions, and that his own preferences in language, as well as the preferences of the community and of his students, have a political and social, rather than a linguistic, origin.

Literature

The study of literature should recognize the cultural integrity and aesthetic qualities of literary works in both oral and written traditions. The candidate should be familiar with a variety of critical approaches to literature, and know enough about the cultural context of a given work that his appreciation is not distorted by the imposition of inappropriate values.

The term "literature" as it is used here includes all forms of expression in language, many of which occur in conjunction with non-verbal and non-printed forms of expression. Therefore, study of literature should include not only the traditional genres (fiction, poetry, drama), periods, and figures, but also films, recordings, tapes, television, and periodicals. This broadening of the term "literature" is intended to assist teachers to help students respond actively and freely to literary experiences, help them understand, as far as possible, why they respond as they do, and help them compare their responses to those of others as well as validate their responses by reference to the actual literature.

It is hoped that teachers with this kind of literary background will, in their own classrooms, recognize actual performance (oral and dramatic presentations, dittoed or mimeographed reproductions of actual student writing) as a valid method of communication and appreciation, and certainly within the tradition of literature. If the candidate has himself had experience in creating original poetry, stories, art, films, etc., he will be much more knowledgeable, sympathetic, and enthusiastic in eliciting original work from his students; he will also understand that creativity is as important to appreciation and understanding as traditional discussions, papers, and tests, if not even more important.

Rhetoric

The study of rhetoric in such programs should include all three of (1) the ways in which a writer (or speaker) can assure that his work meets the interests and needs of his audience and achieves his purpose or purposes with that audience; (2) the ways in which a writer, by the details he records and the language he uses, refines—indeed "creates"—his world and identifies himself; and (3) the ways in which a writer can, through

writing, come to an understanding of his experiences and himself. The term "experiences" here includes reading and talking.

Teaching Skill

The need for planning junior college training courses particularly for future junior college teachers is perhaps greatest with respect to courses in teaching methods. Although these guidelines suggest work in the psychology of learning, this work should not be the typical "ed psych" course with its traditional and substantial attention to child development, to psychomotor control, and the like. Rather, such work should make the student aware of contemporary analyses of learning programs, and offer him strategies for teaching college-age students and adults. He might well take a practicum whose subject matter consists largely of the problems and successes of other prospective teachers, under the supervision of an instructor with extensive and recent junior college teaching experience.

Since the other demands on the teaching candidate's time are heavy, and since he will, through his contacts with junior college instructional staffs and university personnel well acquainted with junior colleges, become aware of the nature of junior colleges and the students who attend them, there should be no required courses devoted to an abstract or theoretical consideration of the history, philosophy, or psychology of education, or, more specifically, of the junior college movement. This is not to say that such courses, properly taught, may not be as liberally educating as other courses in history, philosophy, psychology, or the like; rather, it is to say that the most pressing needs of the prospective junior college teacher are rooted elsewhere.

Three specific areas in which most prospective teachers do need conscious and analytic study are writing, reading, and speech, and unless the candidate already possesses competence in these areas, courses should be provided.

Writing

Obviously the candidate needs competence in writing beyond that required in his own freshman composition course. The form his training should take, however, must be determined not so much by his preference as by his shortcomings. He should have experience in imaginative writing (poetry, short stories, drama, film, etc.), in journalistic reporting, in argumentative prose, and in straightforward explanations. Although he may not need formal courses, he should have enough experience and competence in all these forms that he will feel comfortable in a junior college, whether his assignment is in transfer composition, in special courses, designed for career programs, in technical writing, or in reporting. Through recollection of his own problems in composing, through criticizing and revising his own writing, and particularly through varied experiences in working with college-age students for whom writing does not come easily, he should gain an inductive, affective understanding of how learning to write can happen, of the kind of advice that will encourage it to happen, and of the limitations of the help that can be given.

Reading

A major part of any junior college English teacher's job, all the time, regardless of the title of the course, is concerned with teaching reading. He must teach reading on all levels, from the most basic to the most sophisticated. Some of the reading he teaches will involve the student's ability to translate from print to speech; some of it will involve reading problems that go beyond phonetics to the greater difficulties presented by unfamiliar vocabulary and the formal syntax of some written material, more convoluted and less straightforward than the syntax of speech; some of it will involve helping students read critically.

A good junior college teacher realizes that successful reading is more than mere translation from one symbolic system to another, more than expansion of vocabulary, more than disentangling syntax, more than the ability to complete a multiple choice test identifying main points and remembering details. A competent reader will look for underlying assumptions and assess the validity of evidence; he will examine ideas logically and philosophically; he will understand how

style relates to and affects content, and he will constantly relate what he reads to his own experience and to the broader world. In other words, he will "read critically."

A good junior college English teacher will welcome such critical skills when he finds them, and he will try to develop them in his students, but he will also realize that this kind of reading ability results from years of practice, practice that many of his students will not have had. Because the majority of prospective junior college teachers have been successful readers for most of their lives, they will find it hard to analyze informally the difficulties and subtleties that go into the reading process. It should not be enough for a candidate to demonstrate his own competence in reading; here is an area where he must demonstrate a sympathetic and comprehensive understanding of the steps that lead to that competence. It is essential that he have a thorough knowledge, not just of how to read, but of how to teach reading.

Speaking

The candidate must demonstrate some competence in areas generally considered the province of the speech department, although it is not necessary that he have training in formal public speaking, in precise diction, or in so-called "standard" pronunciation. What he should be able to demonstrate is some skill in interpretative reading, considerable ease in speaking slowly enough, enunciating clearly enough, and explaining things in language sufficiently clear that his hearers have no trouble following what he is saying. He should also demonstrate some skill in leading and sparking group discussions and in careful listening. He should understand that the arts of writing, reading, speaking, and listening, although distinct, are closely related, and he should understand what these relationships are.

Related Disciplines

Subjects from other disciplines should be included in the program. Work in rural and urban sociology, anthropology, the psychology of learning and creativity, minority and majority concerns (ethnic, socio-economic, political, etc.) will provide the candidate with background for and understanding of the literature he will teach, and the plurality of experience his students will bring to the study of English. It is enormously important for the successful junior college English teacher to understand the self-concepts brought to school by his students; he should be able to empathize with those self-concepts, even though they are vastly different from his own; and he must be able to work with, or within, those self-concepts. Work in sociology and psychology is included to help teachers understand the sources of behavior and attitudes in their students, and the reasons for the students' conceiving themselves and their place in the world as they do.

Training in Evaluating Student Work

The candidate should receive training in evaluating student work in two ways: by guided practice during his internship, and by taking a practical seminar which carefully considers and assesses the effects of various kinds of evaluations. The criteria to be used, the constructive effect of appreciative comments, the damaging effect of mere "paper marking" or over-criticizing, can best be realized in seminar discussions using actual material, both that written by the candidate himself and that written by students with whom he has been working. Such seminars can come close to reproducing the effectiveness of both conferences and peer criticism, and can thus demonstrate to the candidate the superiority of such methods. There should be no need to reinforce such inductive learning by any formal course in measuring and evaluating, especially since many junior colleges employ special resource people in this field. The two competencies the candidate must demonstrate are his ability to comment constructively on papers and his ability to hold profitable student conferences. He should also demonstrate his recognition that student response to literature often cannot be fairly measured by the ability to write an effective essay or take part in a critical discussion.

Interning

Every program for preparing junior college English teachers should include a strong

intern system. In the past, too many new teachers have faced their classes without firsthand experience with the kind of students or the range of teaching assignments commonplace in the two-year college. The traditional TA experience, with its carefully screened students in conventional transfer composition courses, is not an adequate substitute; neither is high school teaching or practice teaching, with its daily lesson plans and its prescribed curriculum, with its disciplinary demands resulting from adolescents required by law to remain in school.

What the candidate needs is on-the-job responsibility for his own junior college classes, with intensive supervision from an experienced, carefully selected, successful junior college teacher. The classes the candidate teaches should be different kinds, preferably at least one on a non-transfer level. He should not be given assignments which involve correcting or marking papers for classes he does not teach, nor busywork calculated to lighten the load of other teachers in the department.

He should have a chance to see the problems in putting together a course, and be especially aware of the dangers of inflexibility. He should be encouraged to modify his original plans to meet the special needs of his students. During his entire internship, he should be welcomed and encouraged to visit as many other English classes as he has time for, to gain some sense of the variety of possible approaches.

Electives

No set requirements nor provision for electives is made in these guidelines, nor can it be under a system in which the only requirement is the demonstration of a set of competencies. Nevertheless, the would-be junior college English teacher should be encouraged to take, and provision should be made to acknowledge, any electives he wishes to include in his program.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING TRAINING PROGRAMS

Any university offering a junior college English training program, or contemplating the creation of one, will of course administer the program under its own rules and according to its own customs. This section of the guidelines is not an attempt to intefere with the operating structure of any university. It touches only on those aspects of administration which clearly might influence the effectiveness or acceptability of a training program, and suggests ways in which some of the unconventional recommendations in these guidelines could be implemented.

Departmental Responsibility for the Training Program

The competencies needed to teach English in the junior college come primarily from the kind of subject-matter courses an English Department can best offer. However, since an Education Department may be best equipped to offer courses in such areas as learning theory, the techniques of teaching reading, etc., the program might profitably draw on the resources of that department. As implied elsewhere in these guidelines, however, it is important that courses in teaching reading, in learning theory, in any methodology, be reconceived so as to focus on teaching college-age students and adults rather than being merely a patchwork of existing courses which retain their present emphases.

Whether the program is offered entirely within the English Department, or offered jointly by two or more departments, or exists within a division of a graduate school specially created to prepare junior college teachers, the program should be directed by a member of the English Department or an experienced junior college English teacher. Although the ultimate approval of the program may come from the regular graduate studies committee of the university, the planning of the program—considerations of competencies, courses, staff, etc.—should come from a committee which includes junior college English teachers as permanent members or regular consultants.

Establishing the Curricula

In the last few years a number of graduate departments have responded to the tremendous growth of junior colleges by offering specially labeled courses in junior college teaching. In the view of many practicing teachers, however, some of these special junior college programs are merely new combinations of previously existing courses, not

very closely related to actual junior college teaching. Although obviously candidates for junior college teaching need the competencies provided by many excellent existing courses, the real need is for programs specially developed to fit the realities found in two year college English departments.

To insure that new programs are really new, that the courses they offer do realistically train toward the unique needs of junior colleges, experienced junior-college teachers should be involved in them: as consultants while the programs are being planned; as seminar directors and teachers while they are going on; as participants on evaluating committees after the programs are established; and as full-time members of the training staff.

Staffing the Program

The staff of a successful training program must include teachers with actual junior college experience. It is desirable, but not essential, that the program be directed or co-directed by someone with such experience. And it is absolutely necessary that the entire staff of the training program be aware of, be knowledgeable about, the nature and problems of junior college teaching.

A system of faculty exchange between junior colleges and training universities is also recommended, on a quarter or semester or full-year basis. One year exchange programs would be long enough to allow for continuity and yet short enough to prevent the junior college teacher's losing his identification with the two-year college. Perhaps the best financial arrangement would be for each teacher in the exchange to work under the salary of his parent school. In those states which do not have well-developed junior college systems it would be much more difficult to arrange faculty exchanges if the teachers involved had to pick up stakes and move to another city or state on a temporary basis. However, an exchange of faculties is such a good way of investigating the other fellow's neighborhood that the results would more than compensate for the problems.

Recruiting Candidates

Candidates should be admitted to the program upon completion of a BA, preferably but not necessarily in English, or without a BA upon demonstration of prerequisite competencies equivalent to those possessed by candidates with bachelor's degrees. The growing use of para-professionals in many urban colleges should eventually make it easier for talented people without formal degrees to teach in junior colleges and to enter the training programs that will enable them to do so.

Whatever the admission requirements, it is essential that university English departments not recommend this program to students whom they believe to be intellectually incapable of completing a traditional Ph.D. program, or even a traditional M.A. The kind of teaching challenge presented in the two-year colleges demands the most talented, the most competent, the most resourceful, the most imaginative candidates, whatever their background is. Properly conceived and directed in a lively and innovative fashion, a program striving to implement the suggestions made in these guidelines should exert a natural and powerful attraction to the kind of candidates desired by junior colleges.

A second consideration is that, during the next decade, at least seventy-five per cent of college-age students will get their introduction to higher education in some kind of two-year college, and thus the employment opportunities in college teaching are likely to be greater there. Further, even though sound research and good teaching are not incompatible, candidates who want to put most of their energies into teaching rather than into research or publication will find better opportunities for tenure and promotion in two-year colleges, where relevant research and publication, although not required, is seldom discouraged.

Junior college teachers themselves can contribute to recruitment by spotting students in their own programs with the potential of becoming good teachers and can guide them toward such training programs.

Arranging Internships

For training universities in states where junior colleges are neither strong nor very well developed, finding positions for interns may offer some difficulty. To help solve the problem of placement, a five or six-state clearing house might be set up, whereby

would-be interns could be matched with junior colleges in need of part-time teachers and equipped to provide adequate supervision.

Interns should be paid no less than the regular rate for part-time teachers in the colleges where they are interning, and the supervising junior college teacher should probably receive his compensation in the form of a reduced teaching load. If the intern teaches two classes during the same semester, a half load for the intern and a three-fourths load for the supervising teacher is probably as equitable an arrangement as could be expected.

Obviously, if intern programs are to be successful, there must be continuing cooperation and conversation between the training institution and the interning institution. Such conversation would insure feedback to the university from both its interning candidate and the junior college, and it would also provide the candidate with a kind of voice in both the junior college and the university, and thus work toward improvement in the programs of both places.

Measuring Competencies

Throughout these guidelines it has been strongly recommended that candidates be allowed and encouraged to meet the requirements of the program by demonstrating competencies as a substitute for taking courses. Such demonstration might take the form of submitting original work where that seems appropriate; an oral discussion with a committee composed of members of the English Department and practicing junior college teachers; or a written examination. It is possible that a candidate might be able to demonstrate sufficient competencies that only the required internship would remain.

This insistence on the candidate's right to demonstrate competencies rather than take courses should not be construed as anti-intellectualism, subliminal or otherwise; it is instead a recognition that experience outside academia often provides attitudes, skills, awareness, and knowledge at least as valuable as those acquired by more traditional methods. Ample precedent exists; secure and established universities often waive undergraduate requirements and frequently confer full professorships upon persons with demonstrated and recognized abilities who lack the usual academic portfolio.

Awarding Degrees

These guidelines assume that the degree most frequently awarded by junior college English training programs will be the MA. The principal reason for this assumption is pragmatic: since a subject-matter MA is required in virtually every junior college district in the country, it would seem more practical to recommend changes in the content of the MA program than to change existing regulations all over the land. Furthermore, since the MA is an established, recognized degree, it is more likely to command the respect and prestige needed to attract candidates than would a newly invented or modified degree.

That the MA is the degree most frequently found in the country's two-year colleges is evidenced by the figures presented in *The Focus Report on the National Study of English in the Junior College*, page 7: more than 84% of the junior college English teachers in the United States in 1969 held an MA or MAT; of the remainder, 6% had Ph.D's and 4% had BA's.

Nothing in these guidelines, however, should be taken as criticism or rejection of any graduate training program, whatever the degree it awards or whatever its emphasis. These guidelines are concerned only with graduate programs which claim to have special concern for preparing junior college English teachers. Such programs should marry reality with scholarships. Whenever a program emphasizes either educational theory or literary criticism to the point of slighting the actualities found in junior college teaching, then there seems an incongruity between its intent and its performance, and these guidelines are concerned with that incongruity.

Like other graduate programs, the new DA's being offered in several universities vary widely in their emphasis. Wherever these DA programs are in substantial agreement with the aims outlined in these guidelines, they seem well suited to training junior college teachers. Wherever the DA represents merely a traditional Ph.D. program, short the dissertation, such degrees are no more suitable than those they replace.

These guidelines make no attempt to specify how long it should take a candidate to earn the degree; it should take him just as long as, and no longer than, the time needed to acquire the necessary competencies. If, after the candidate has taught a few years, additional knowledge in his discipline seems desirable, or important to his integrity and his career, his actual teaching experience should make the additional training more valuable to him. For graduates of these programs who do go on to further study, the work they have done toward their junior college MA's should be fully accredited toward either a DA or a Ph.D.

In-Service Training

In view of the desire for added professional preparation reported in all the surveys made in the last decade, it seems apparent that some kind of in-service training for practicing junior college English teachers is needed, either in the form of summer institutes or programs offered at the junior colleges themselves. A detailed description of the form such in-service programs might take is beyond the scope of these guidelines, but it seems obvious that the competencies called for here must form the basis for compensatory in-service training however it is acquired.

A few excellent institutes have already been offered. Planned and staffed by a cooperating committee of junior college and university people, and aimed at many of the specific issues discussed in these guidelines, such institutes can perform a valuable service to the profession. More are needed.

Other Publications from NCTE

English in the Two-Year College. Edited by Samuel Weingarten and Frederick P. Kroeger. Gives a profile of English instruction in the two-year college: requirements for graduation, placement in composition courses, the regular course in composition, remedial and honors courses, teachers' professional qualifications. Makes recommendations for the professional improvement of teachers of English in the two-year college. 112p. 1965. NCTE Stock No. 01802. $2.00 ($1.80).

Prospects for the 70's: English Departments and Multidisciplinary Study. Edited by Harry Finestone and Michael F. Shugrue. This collection attempts to provide a rationale for the involvement of English departments in interdisciplinary work. It argues for a careful review of existing English programs and an open-minded evaluation of interdisciplinary and nontraditional approaches. 256p. Modern Language Association, 1973. NCTE Stock No. 20523. $4.75 ($4.25).

Research and the Development of English Programs in the Junior College. Edited by Jerome W. Archer. Papers discuss the relation of two-year colleges to high schools and four-year colleges; the preparation of junior college teachers; English courses for adults and community services; how to ensure that junior college courses are realistically adapted to the needs of students. Includes suggestions for research in junior college English and research designs. 134p. 1965. NCTE Stock No. 04505. $2.00 ($1.80).

Prices in parentheses are members' prices. Order from NCTE Order Department, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.